

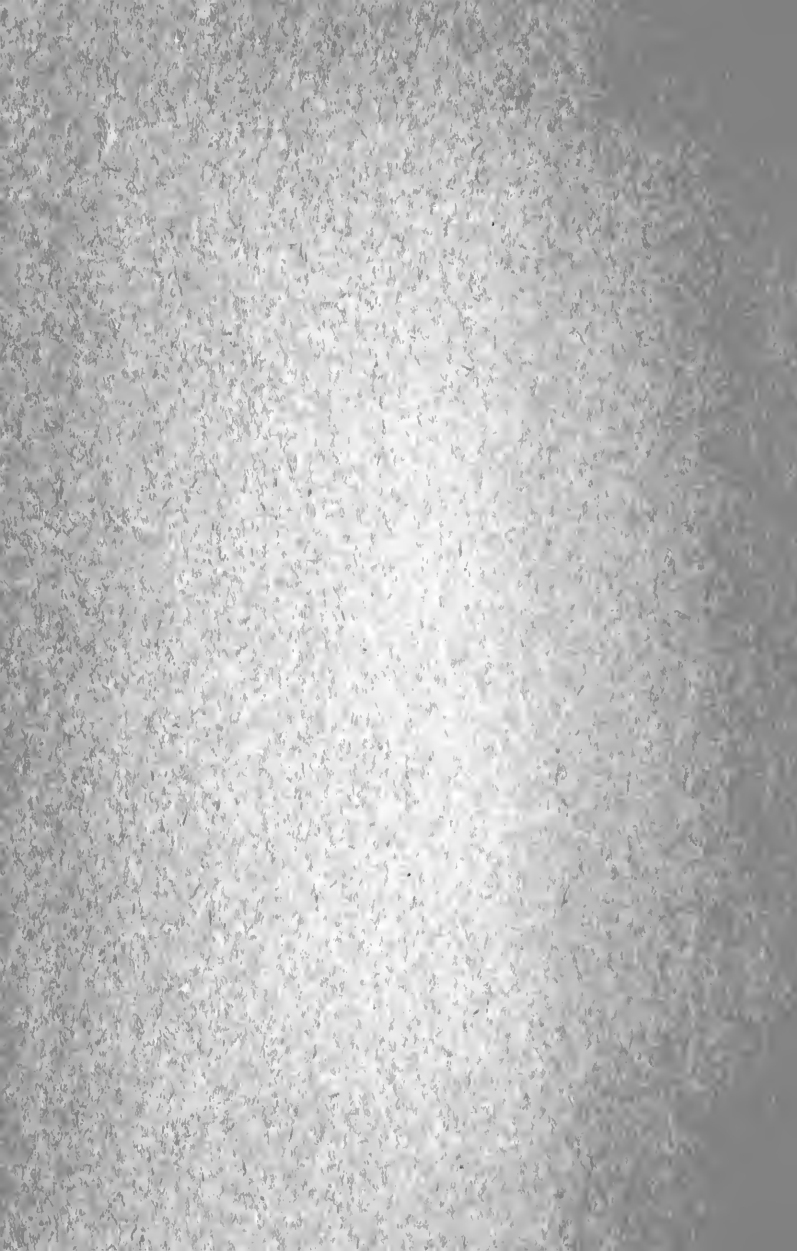


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THE SPIRIT OF THE  
ALLIED NATIONS

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King's College Lectures in Imperial Studies

# THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIED NATIONS

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

SIDNEY LOW

FRANCE . . . . BY PAUL STUDER

RUSSIA . . . . BY ALEXIS ALADIN

BELGIUM . . . . BY PAUL HAMELIUS

THE SERB . . . BY R. W. SETON-WATSON

JAPAN . . . . BY J. H. LONGFORD

BRITISH EMPIRE BY SIDNEY LOW

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
By SIDNEY LOW, M.A., Honorary Lecturer on Imperial and Colonial History, London University, King's College; Author of <i>The Governance of England</i> , etc.	
II. THE SPIRIT OF FRANCE . . . . .	25
By PAUL STUDER, M.A., Taylorian Professor of the Romance Languages in the University of Oxford.	
III. THE SPIRIT OF RUSSIA . . . . .	51
By ALEXIS ALADIN, late a Member of the Russian Duma.	
IV. THE SPIRIT OF BELGIUM . . . . .	71
By PAUL HAMELIUS, D. ès L., Professor of English Literature in the University of Liège.	
V. THE SPIRIT OF THE SERB . . . . .	89
By R. W. SETON-WATSON, D.Litt.; Author of <i>The Southern Slav Question</i> , etc.	
VI. THE SPIRIT OF JAPAN . . . . .	121
By J. H. LONGFORD, M.A., Professor of Japanese, University of London, King's College; late H.M. Consul at Nagasaki.	
VII. THE SPIRIT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND ITS ALLIES . . . . .	159
By SIDNEY LOW.	
APPENDIX—FRANCE IN WAR TIME . . . . .	195



# THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIED NATIONS

## I

### INTRODUCTION

BY SIDNEY LOW, M.A.

THE papers published in this volume are the work of a number of writers, each of whom views his subject from his own standpoint and expresses his individual opinion. But they are linked by a common design and a common purpose. They are associated with the war, though they deal neither with its events nor with its immediate causes. Behind the diplomacy, the politics, and the strategy, of the great conflict on land and sea there lie the elements of national culture, of national ideals, of national habits, of national character, and of the effects left by them all on the national history: in other words, of that impalpable,

## 2 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

but very real, force which we may call the national spirit. To consider in some manner this Spirit of the Allied Nations, in one or other of its manifestations in each case, is the aim of those who have contributed to the book.

In its origin it is associated with a new phase of educational activity which is taking shape in London. In June 1914 the Senate of the University appointed an "Imperial Studies Committee," formed of men of whom the majority had gained distinction as statesmen, jurists, administrators, historians, or academic teachers.<sup>1</sup> The functions of this committee are to advise the governing body of the University and its colleges on those branches of study and learning which deal with the constitutions, sociology, economics, and history, of empires and nations, particularly of the British Empire and its component nations, states, and territories.

When the war broke out, and normal academic activities were interrupted, it appeared to the committee that useful service might be done if public lectures were delivered by com-

<sup>1</sup> The President of the Committee is Lord Milner; and among its other members are Lord Bryce, Sir Charles Lucas, formerly Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Sumner, Sir Krishna Gupta and Sir Theodore Morison, members of the India Council, Sir John Macdonnell, Sir Charles Lyall, Dr. G. R. Parkin, Sir Harry Johnston, and Professor A. F. Pollard.

petent authorities on some of the wider and less obvious aspects of the situation. The suggestion was welcomed by the schools of the University; and series were arranged at University College, King's College, Bedford College, and elsewhere. At King's College the topic selected was "The Spirit of the Allied Nations," and the essays which follow are a reprint, with some additions and modifications, of the lectures delivered in this course. As I was myself honoured with an invitation to give one of these addresses, I will not presume to assert that in every case the subject was entrusted to a specialist of the highest authority. But I think the names of my colleagues will show that the Principal of the College, and Dr. A. P. Newton, the Secretary to the Imperial Studies Committee, exercised a wise judgment, and were fortunate in obtaining the services of a distinguished body of scholars, British and foreign. The difficult task of summarising in a concise form the characteristics of the French people was left in the capable hands of Professor Paul Studer, who holds the chair of Romance Languages at Oxford.<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of Russia

<sup>1</sup> I have ventured to include in this volume, in further illustration of the subject treated by Prof. Studer, my own personal impressions of the Spirit of France, at this time of supreme trial, gathered in the course of a visit to the French war-zone. See below, Appendix D.

#### 4 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

is charmingly treated by M. Alexis Aladin, who has not only studied the history and institutions of his country but has been practically concerned, as a Member of the Duma, in the great movement of Russian political reform. The survey of Belgium was undertaken by Professor Hamelius of Liège, not the least notable among that notable band of Belgian scholars who, driven into enforced exile, are giving us some insight into the intellectual and literary activity that has been so ruthlessly disturbed. Mr. J. H. Longford, now Professor of Japanese in London, is well qualified, by long residence in the Far East, to speak on that elusive topic, the Soul of Japan; and Dr. Seton-Watson, who deals with the Spirit of the Serbs, is recognised as a most accomplished and sympathetic British student of the peoples and politics of the Danube Valley.

Each of these writers, as I have said, takes his own point of view, and adopts his own specific and individual method of conveying to his readers his conception of the national psychology he is endeavouring to illuminate. This I think is an advantage. For the spirit, the *ἦθος*, the mental and moral temperament of a state or family of states, may be envisaged from many different aspects, and considered in diverse ways. Man, as Aristotle says, is a political animal.



He is also a social, a domestic, a laborious, and as a rule also a religious, and artistic, and to some degree a philosophical, animal; and his communal character may be illustrated by a consideration of any of these attributes. The spirit of a nation is embodied not only in its wars, its politics, its government, and its history, but likewise in its literature, its theology, its thought, its art, its tastes, and its personal habits. All these factors would have to be estimated if an exhaustive examination of the complex theme were attempted. In the concise appreciations here presented it is sufficient to touch, in each case, on a few of them, as the authors have done. M. Studer, for instance, devotes himself particularly to the intellectual and artistic side of the French nature, maintaining—and it would be difficult to disagree with him—that here at least the influence of France on what we must still call the “culture” of the modern world has been unrivalled. Even Germany, he reminds us, has received constant inspiration and stimulus from this source; and it is a reminder worth giving at a time when “Germanic” pretensions in the cultural sphere have been pushed to the most extravagant lengths. “Except for a few isolated periods of spontaneous activity, Germany, in most questions of art and letters, remained the

## 6 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

tributary of France down to the eighteenth century. Is it a mere coincidence that the masterpieces of Old, as well as Modern, German literature were produced after periods in which French influence reached its maximum of intensity? The fact remains that Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, received their earliest inspirations from France, and made their first literary attempts at a time when French alone was spoken at Potsdam and in fashionable society, at a time when Frederic of Prussia declared that German was fit only for the conversation of his grooms and his Pomeranian soldiers." Professor Studer carries his survey further along these lines, and endeavours to associate the intellectual distinction of France with that clear, penetrating, scepticism, that tendency to be gay and calm and easy where other peoples are gloomy or perplexed, which flickers and glances through French literature from the author of *Aucassin and Nicolette* to the author of *Candide*, and again from Voltaire to Anatole France.

That is one view of the soul of a people. There is another such as is taken by other contributors to this volume when they look to historical, ethnological, and political influences. "What is *l'âme belge*?" asks M. Hamelius; and he answers it by reminding us that Belgium

stands between the Latin and Teutonic worlds, a link between them if also a barrier, a chemical compound of the two elements from which a new substance has been evolved. Flemish, French, Walloon, a little German, are the languages of Belgium, and the same strains are in the blood of the people. The national character shows the mixture: the Latin vivacity, the Dutch caution and shrewdness, the emotional faith of the South, the practical outlook upon life of the North, the mysticism and the frank materialism which made Rubens the painter both of the Antwerp Crucifixion and of the drunken Silenus.

“The spirit of a nation,” says M. Aladin, “manifests itself in many forms. . . . In the graceful dancing of a Pavlova and the scientific achievement of a Mendeleef, in the symphony of a Tschaikowsky, the national spirit of Russia flashes no less than in the victories of a Russian Commander-in-Chief.” But it is the spirit of the great Russian masses, the peasantry and the labourers, that M. Aladin discusses most fruitfully. He shows how deeply it has been misunderstood by Germany, who with all her systematic grasp of facts and things does most commonly misunderstand the emotions and the ideas of other peoples. She mistook the temper of Russia as she did that of Britain and

## 8 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

Ireland. She saw that the middle and lower classes, the merchant associations, the members of the town and district councils and the zemstvos, were deeply discontented at the failure of the reform movement and the reactionary policy which had been pursued by the Government since 1906. Russia—so the German spies reported to their employers—was “seething with revolution,” and on the verge of another paralysing social upheaval. What the spies did not report, because that is the last thing spies would know or guess, was that, deep below all this surface commotion, there lay sleeping the passionate sense of racial and religious unity which is the soul of Russia. “The Germans considered the Russians and the Slavs in general to be anarchistic by nature and devoid of any sense of statesmanship. They thought that the democracy of Russia would not grasp the seriousness of the situation and would indulge in internecine warfare while their country was in danger. Directly war was declared by Germany on Russia, the Russian democracy, irrespective of parties, sections, and creeds, rallied round the Government and the Tsar, without hesitation or delay. No conditions were put forward, no bargaining took place. The workmen who were on strike in Petrograd (over one hundred and fifty thousand men),

and were already on the point of building barricades, returned to work as one man and helped the troops to entrain for the frontier on the first day of the declaration of war."

Russia, adds M. Aladin, like Britain, is great enough to enjoy the luxury of internal conflict in time of peace, and to face alien foes in war in absolute unity. "Broadly speaking, before the war the Russian people were divided into two camps—on one side the Government and their adherents, conservative by nature, reactionary by the force of circumstances; on the other, the young, creative, progressive, elements of the nation, striving to make the country go forward, possibly quicker than it could. Neither of the two sections was sufficiently strong to impose its will upon the other. . . . The war declared by Germany provided a common ground of co-operation for both sections, the conservative governing party and the young progressive democracy." A Liberal and a progressive himself, M. Aladin is not blind to the faults and the past misdeeds of the Muscovite autocracy, developed in its modern form largely under the German influences of the eighteenth century. But he is full of hope for the future of a society which is permeated by the sentiment of equality beyond most

## 10 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

others, and seems capable of becoming at once democratic and idealist.

In treating of the spirit of the Serbs and the spirit of Japan, Mr. Seton-Watson and Professor Longford analyse their subject a little more closely from the standpoint of history, geography, and contemporary politics. Modern Japan, as Mr. Longford shows, is not so unaccountable as it sometimes appears to amazed observers at a distance or even at close quarters. It is the product of its own past, of its religious and ethical conceptions, of its situation, its scenery, and its climate. The Japanese Spirit, even under its present investiture of Western clothing, railways, battleships, and cotton-mills, bears still, and must always bear, the impress of the land where it became incarnate.

“The cherry flower,” says Professor Longford, “is an emblem of life to the Japanese. Its only failing is that it is very shortlived. The first rough wind scatters its petals and covers the ground with a pale-pink carpet, and soon all is over. And so should life be. Sunny, bright and beautiful when all goes well, but ever ready for sacrifice. As the cherry is first among flowers, so is Fuji first among mountains, in its peerless grace and awe-inspiring majesty, the darling subject of poets and painters through countless centuries. Eruptions, earthquakes, and tidal waves have had the inevitable influence of the more terrible phenomena of Nature in stimulating the imagination and in cultivating

a spirit of reverence which made the people find many of the gods of nature in their enormous Shinto pantheon. But Nature's bounty far exceeds its terrors, and the physical beauties of their land have contributed in no small degree to make its inhabitants the happy, gentle, laughter-loving, frugal, courteous, artistic, and poetic people they are."

From Professor Longford's description of the Japanese country, the Japanese society, and the Japanese institutions, we can see how physical environment, habit, customs, religion, and events have worked together to produce this young nation which is yet nearly the oldest of all, which looks so confidently to the Future and with so much reverence and deep-seated ancestral piety to the Past.

And in like manner the stormy spirit of the Serb has been nurtured amid the tempestuous blasts that have beaten upon him for centuries. They are fair lands, these Balkan countries, though not fair with the smiling beauty, the translucent tints, of Nippon. Green valleys there are, and fertile plains; but seldom, as one travels from the Adriatic to the Ægean, is one out of sight of serrated ridges and scarred black peaks or stony hills like those which stride, gaunt and bare, from Albania and Montenegro into Herzegovina, and frown over the shelf of the Dalmatian seaboard. Yet it

## 12 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

is not Nature so much as Man that has put iron into the soul of the Serbs and turned these kindly peasants into warriors and heroes. The ruin of the old Græco-Roman civilisation, first through internecine conflict, and then under the destroying hoof of the Turks, is the darkest tragedy of European history. But amid the wreck, the Southern Slavs, powerless, dis-united, unorganised, serfs indeed beneath the yoke of the Tartar horde from Asia, kept alive their religion, their language, the consciousness of their identity, even their art and poetry hidden under folk-songs and popular ballads, till artists and scholars arose in the fulness of time to bring them back to literature.

Many oppressed nationalities have been held down for decades or generations by the force of alien oppression ; but the martyrdom of the Serbs has been endured for five hundred years. And for five hundred years after the battle of Kosovo in June 1359 the Serbs cherished the memory of that Illyrian Empire which seemed destined to transmit to the modern world the traditions of Byzantine culture under Slavonic rulers. No wonder that when at length the Turks were utterly routed on that same historic field of Kosovo the Serbs went wild with delight, and that the ambition to reunite all the branches of the Illyrian race has nerved them to endure



the sufferings and trials of three devastating campaigns. It is a warrior soul, that of Serbia : how can it be otherwise with a people whose annals are so drenched in the blood and tears of war? "Soldiers," said the old King of Serbia the other day to his troops at the front " (so Mr. Seton-Watson reminds us),—"soldiers, you have taken two oaths; one to me your king, one to your country. From the first I release you, for the situation is far too grave to justify me, an old man on the edge of the grave, in holding you to it; from the oath to your country no man can release you. But I promise you, that if you decide to return to your homes, and if fortune favours our cause, you shall not be made to suffer. And whether you go or stay, I and my sons remain here." King Peter, we are told, knows his Shakespeare, and it may be there was in his mind some sub-conscious recollection of the great speech of Henry v. before the battle of Agincourt :

"We would not die in that man's company,  
That fears his fellowship to die with us."

Such is the spirit of Serbia : and such was the spirit of England when England was a small nation, like Serbia, struggling for freedom and self-expression against an Empire more magnificent in appearance even than the Germany

## 14 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

of to-day.<sup>1</sup> It is not without significance that the war, which has involved all the greater states of the world except one, originated in attacks on two of the smallest. Russia drew the sword for Serbia as Britain did for Belgium. In both cases there was at stake the principle of nationality, the right of a people, with a corporate consciousness and a common tradition, to live its own life, free from the control of alien authority.

There is much else at issue in this tremendous conflict ; but the idea of nationality, of national freedom, national unity, and national development, underlies it all. The war, as I have endeavoured to point out in my essay on the Spirit of the British Empire, is a sequel to the wars and the settlements of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Errors in policy, and the ambitions of princes, statesmen, and political groups, may have precipitated the catastrophe ; but the seed was sown

<sup>1</sup> The population of Elizabethan England was probably little more than that of Serbia at the opening of the present war. The King of Spain and the Indies, between 1580 and 1640, ruled over a much greater extent of territory than the House of Hohenzollern has ever done, for his dominions included Spain and Portugal, the Netherlands, Flanders, and Franche Comté, the Kingdom of Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and the Milanese, and almost the whole of Central and South America ; with many settlements and stations on the coasts of Africa and Asia.

and germinated in the soil upheaved by the earlier convulsions. The Europe which sought to rearrange its affairs after the revolutionary and Napoleonic era was seething with the ferment of democracy and nationality. Unhappily the soldiers and diplomatists who reconstructed the map in haste at the Congress of Vienna were under the bondage of the old legitimacy and the old legalism. They thought more of the rights of kings than of the rights of peoples; they feared democracy much more than despotism; they looked upon a nation as the result of treaties and royal marriages rather than the product of natural and spiritual forces; they endeavoured to restore the highly artificial system, based on "scraps of paper," themselves often the result of successful force, dynastic intrigue, and historical accident, which was the legacy of the nineteenth century from the eighteenth. They refused to repair the misdeeds of the past, or to provide for the evolutionary growth of the future, considering—no doubt honestly enough—that a mechanical external order was more likely to secure the welfare of the various communities than the satisfaction of those perilous aspirations which so often lead to turmoil and unrest. So they left the larger part of Europe a chaos of divided peoples, imperfect states, and subject nationali-

## 16 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

ties. Poland remained partitioned between its despoilers ; Catholic Belgium was wedded in unnatural union with Protestant Holland ; Germany was a turbid pool of kings, princes, grand-dukes, free cities, with the two great toothed monarchies swimming open-mouthed among the minnows ; the Turk, a conqueror no longer but a tyrant still, trampled over the Christian peoples of South-eastern Europe ; Italy lay bound and chafing under its alien oppressors, with the Bourbons at Naples and Austrian sabres clanking on the quays of Venice.

Such a " settlement " could not endure. The wars and rebellions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were attempts to unmake its articles or to repair its omissions. The revolutionary outbreaks of 1848, the Hungarian war of independence of 1849, the Polish insurrection of 1863, the Crimean war, the Franco-Austrian war of 1859, the war between the Germanic Powers and Denmark in 1864, and that between those Powers themselves two years later, the Franco-Prussian war, the wars between Russia and Turkey and Greece and Turkey, and those of Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria against their Ottoman enemy and one another, from which this last and greatest war of all has developed,—these are episodes in

the struggle to attain, or to repress, national aspirations after unity or freedom, or both.

In the case of Italy the aim has been achieved, or virtually achieved, after many struggles and trials, in the creation of a self-governing nation-state. In Germany, Austria, and Russia, subject nationalities have remained under the control of a dominating alien Power, whose authority is inconsistent with complete internal freedom. In Serbia, Greece, and Poland, the work of reuniting the divided national groups is unfinished, or not yet begun. The entire process has been complicated by the movement for democratic and social reform within the several countries, and by the effort to obtain an increasing share of territory and influence outside the European area. The struggle for Empire and the struggle for Nationhood have gone on side by side, and even those countries, like France and England, which have not felt the latter impulse, because they became nation-states long ago, have been powerfully affected by the former. Germany, to her misfortune and the misfortune of the world, has been stirred by both forces at once too soon and too late. She has striven for empire while as yet her nationhood is incomplete, while the discordant elements in her composition have not been assimilated or reconciled, while she is still in

## 18 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

the grasp of the military monarchy which forged political unity by the sword.

In the Great Peace, which will follow the Great War, the problem of empire and the problem of nationality must be solved if Europe is not to be plunged back once again into the old welter of confusion and conflict ; and both solutions must be consistent with the inexorable claims of democracy. The Will to Live and the Will to Power : these are the "fell opposed opposites," as they are sometimes represented, which our statesmanship must bring into harmony if our civilisation is to escape bankruptcy. Nationality is the political expression of that emotion or sentiment which is fostered by association, sympathy, fellowship, local attachment. In this year of wonder and pain, as men are giving their lives by the ten thousand on the blood-drenched fields of Europe, one is tempted sometimes, in all reverence and humility, to ask what the vision is that gleams before the failing eyes of those who have made the last sacrifice for their country. And one may suggest that it is usually something personal, concrete, exquisitely intimate and real. Some village asleep in the sunshine of an English June, with rose-embowered porches and whispering elms ; some surf-whipped beach of Finisterre, where the dim lights from the cottage windows

cross the lanterns of the fishing-boats in the bay ; some huddle of grey towers and brown roofs at the foot of a vine-clad hill above the reaches of the Rhine : such, one may suppose, is the picture that the last sigh for England, or France, or Germany will evoke : this, and with it all that these things bring back of love, friendship, childhood, home, and work. The idea is embodied in the beautiful verses of a poet who is also a distinguished man of action, a diplomatist and administrator who has fought and laboured for Britain in many fields :

“ Oh England, island England, if it has been my lot,  
To live long years in alien lands with men who love  
    thee not,  
I do but love thee better, who know each wind that  
    blows—  
The wind that slays the blossom, the wind that buds  
    the rose,  
The wind that shakes the taper mast, and keeps  
    the topsail furled,  
The wind that braces nerve and arm to battle with  
    the world.  
I love thy moss-deep grasses, thy great untortured  
    trees,  
The cliffs that wall thy havens, the weed-scents of  
    thy seas,  
The dreamy river reaches, the quiet English homes,  
The milky path of sorer down which the Springtide  
    comes.  
Oh land so loved through length of years, so tended  
    and caressed,  
The land that never stranger wronged nor foeman  
    dared to waste,

## 20 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

Remember those thou speedest forth round all the  
world to be,  
Thy witness to the nations, thy warders on the sea !  
And keep for those who leave thee and find no better  
place,  
The olden smile of welcome, the unchanged mother  
face.”<sup>1</sup>

Man is a creature of the emotions ; but also he is of imagination all compact. He cannot live without the actual, the tangible, the intelligible things that appeal to his senses and his affections ; but he needs something else, something that nourishes his faith in the unseen and the impersonal. And he usually satisfies this instinct by devotion to some great abstraction, often vaguely conceived but worshipped with a tenacity that defies death and pain. For most peoples in most ages the ideal has taken a religious or supernatural shape, and men have fought and died to vindicate their own view of the Divine Nature or their own belief in its chosen interpreters. In the modern world we are in the presence of a new faith, or a new development of a very old faith, which we may call the Religion of Empire or the Religion of Race-Consciousness. Some mysterious impulse drives men forward, as if by a physiological necessity, to add to the greatness of their

<sup>1</sup> From *Ballads of the Fleet and other Poems*, by Sir Rennell Rodd, G.C.V.O., British Ambassador in Italy.



country, to extend its territory, to draw into its sphere of political influence peoples with which it has geographical or ethnological relations. The synthetic and the dialytic or disruptive tendency manifest themselves side by side; the larger Powers seek to bring into their orbit the adjacent minor groups or remote dependencies; the lesser units try to tear themselves apart or to attract to themselves the kindred populations under alien control. The one instinct has impelled Germany to absorb Poles, Danes, Alsatians, and Lorrainers, and—if it can—Flemings and Walloons; it urges her to build for herself an oversea empire in Africa, and a sphere of exploitation in Asia Minor. The other impulse is that which causes Bulgaria to fight for Rumelia and Macedonia, Greece to aim at uniting all the scattered Hellenic communities of the islands and the mainland, Serbia to shed blood like water in order to wrest from Austria her Serb and Slovene subjects; it is that which moves Czechs and Finns and—may one add?—many Roman Catholic Irishmen to make themselves “a nation yet.” Often, in the past, whole peoples and races,

“Like dragons of the prime,  
That tear each other in their slime,”

have plunged into carnage for a formula or the date of a church festival. To-day they are

## 22 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

turning Europe into a charnel-house for ideas of nationhood and empire, freedom and dominion, —the Will to Live and the Will to Power.

Must then these splendid and terrible fantasies of the intellect and imagination be for ever in conflict? Is there no means of conciliating the synthetic imperial impetus with that of national and individual self-realisation? The answer, as I venture to suggest below, is to be found in the history and the situation of the British Empire. The war, whatever it may mean for others, is for us a triumphant vindication of the principles which animate the world - amalgam gathered under the British Crown. That rally of the Empire has surprised ourselves and amazed our enemies. From the vast dependencies which are empires in themselves, and the great dominions which are nations, to the "last least rock of coral" over which the flag of England flies, the states and peoples of the realm have closed in against the foe. The Germans believed that at the first touch of foreign attack the fabric would fall to pieces. They knew that it was built up of diverse, even discordant, elements, of many communities, jealously aware of their own separate identity, thrilling with national aspirations. Their eyes were held so that they could not see the binding reality that lies beneath

this diversity, the reality of liberty and autonomy and law. They did not understand that the imperial system of Britain, so strangely evolved through fortunate accidents and serviceable errors, gives scope for local self-government and local ambitions, while it enables races and peoples, sundered by speech, climate, religion, and distance, to work together freely for the common good.

The system is still incomplete, chaotic, ill-organised. But even in its present development it goes far to solve the problem which is at the root of our present catastrophe, the problem of reconciling *Imperium et Libertas*, Empire and Nationhood, the rights of the small units and the insistent demands of the great political associations. May we not hope that in this direction the evolution of the future lies, not for Britain alone, but for the world? It does not seem visionary to suggest that this will be the eventual result of the most calamitous conflict in which humanity has ever been involved. Not soon, or easily, but in the fulness of time, the world may contain not one but several great federated Empires besides the British: the Russian, the German, the Franco-African, the South Slavonic, the Chinese, the Scandinavian. In them local, sectional, and racial sentiment will find full play for national

## 24 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

autonomy, under the general direction or advice of some supreme Council of Government, which will be in its essence constitutional even though it may not be, in every case, democratic in its form.

S. L.

## II

### THE SPIRIT OF FRANCE

BY PROFESSOR PAUL STUDER, M.A.

ALTHOUGH the individuals of any nation present the greatest variety of types (and nowhere is this more true than in France), we are aware that they have something in common, that to some extent their nationality is stamped upon their foreheads. There is something which enables us, quite apart from the language, to tell a Frenchman from a German, or to a lesser degree a Frenchman from an Italian. But to express in words what that something is, or, to use a more academic term, to analyse the collective soul and mentality of a nation, is a very difficult task at the best of times. It is more difficult still at the present moment, when our means of diagnosis and our reasoning faculties are warped by sentiment and passion. Only a skilled psychologist can undertake it with any degree of confidence, and even he is

## 26 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

likely to go wrong. The amateur is sure to commit the worst blunders, and to take for the rule what is merely an exception, like that oft-quoted English traveller who on setting foot on French soil met a red-haired woman and proceeded to make an entry in his notebook: "In France the women have red hair." It is owing to irrelevant observations of this kind that so many false opinions about foreigners have found their way into this country. Of course, Englishmen travel too much on the Continent nowadays to retain the fanciful notions they once cherished concerning the outward appearance and manners of the Frenchman. They have stayed sufficiently long in French hotels and pensions to realise that, though the Frenchman may occasionally indulge in a dish of snails, his daily fare does not consist of frogs. But how many notions equally fanciful about his temperament, his mentality, and especially his morals, are still firmly rooted in English minds !

At the present moment, when the two nations are bent upon a common task of the greatest magnitude, it is essential that Englishmen should have a sounder knowledge both of the qualities and of the failings of their partners. If I do not share in the traditional English prejudices about France, it is possible that my vision may be

obscured by other prejudices contracted in my native country, Switzerland. It is true that I spent my youth just on the fringe of France (my parents' house was situated exactly two hundred yards from the French border), and all my life I have been in contact with Frenchmen and still more with French thought. But I am neither a psychologist nor a historian, and the prepossessions conferred upon me by birth and education may lead me into grave errors and misconceptions. One thought comforts me: if I do blunder I shall be one of a numerous, if not congenial, company. Professed psychologists, even those trained in the best German schools, have in the past completely misunderstood the French character.

After 1871, after the first flush of victory, the Germans set themselves thoroughly to diagnose the French nation. There were divergencies of opinion concerning minor symptoms, but there was amongst them a wonderful unanimity in proclaiming that France, like all Latin countries, with the possible exception of Italy (especially after she had joined the Triple Alliance), was a decadent nation slowly dying of old age. The firm hand of an enlightened despot might return the general disintegration, which democracy would inevitably accelerate. Of one thing they were fully convinced: that the utter downfall

## 28 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

of France was only a question of time. Thus one authority in 1873 said :

“ It will not be necessary for Germany ever to undertake a fresh war against France ; the whole fabric of the French nation, deprived of the support of the enlightened classes, undermined by professional politicians and the revolutionary clique of Parisian hotheads, will tumble to pieces of its own accord.”

But to the amazement, not of Germany alone, but of the whole world, France, with grim determination, at once undertook the work of reconstruction. She acquitted herself of the extortionate impositions which the victor had laid upon her. She administered her resources so skilfully that in a few years her financial position was better and sounder than that of her enemy. She even found it possible to embark on large schemes of colonisation which compensated in some measure for her loss of territory in Alsace-Lorraine. As the French Yellow Book so aptly puts it, in reviewing the affair of Agadir :

“ The events of 1911 caused a great disillusionment in Germany. A new France, united, resolute, and determined no longer to be intimidated, had emerged from the shroud in which during the previous ten years Germany saw her becoming enveloped during the last



ten years. From December to May [of that year] German public opinion discovered, with mingled surprise and irritation manifested in the Press of all parties . . . that the vanquished of 1870 had never ceased since then to wage war, to display its flag and the prestige of its arms in Asia and Africa, and to conquer vast territories."

Only a short time before the outbreak of the present war, a professor of Bonn, reviewing the events of the last forty years, could not help remarking, with an obvious feeling of bitterness and disappointment, that during those forty years France had acquired a colonial empire infinitely more valuable than that which Germany, at much greater cost, had succeeded in building up during the same period. Last August, when her insatiable foe brutally challenged her to try once more the fortunes of war, France took up the challenge with a dignity and courage which will redound to her honour, whatever be the issue of the contest.

Yet we cannot doubt that most of the German psychologists and historians did their work conscientiously. They put their finger on several weak spots in the French character; but they made no allowance for the unexpected, for those wonderful recoveries of which the French nation in particular has often shown itself capable; they overlooked the inexhaust-

## 30 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

ible vitality which pulsates in its veins. Even as the humiliations of 1793 called forth the unexpected might of Napoleon, so the greater humiliation of 1870 wrought a slower but an even deeper change in the temper of the nation. It has established democracy on a firm foundation, overhauled and purified every department of public life, and set up a government far more efficient than is generally credited abroad. The squabbles of the politicians, and the irregularities of some of the officials, have often obscured the enormous progress realised in this respect.

This naturally leads us to ask two questions : (1) What constitutes nationality ? (2) Is the character and spirit of a nation susceptible of changes ? The first looms largely on the horizon of modern politics. It has often been discussed, it has elicited brilliant answers, yet it can hardly be said to have been definitely settled. When this war draws to a conclusion, the whole of mankind will watch with interest the interpretation which diplomatists will give to this rather evasive term, nationality. On that interpretation the future peace of Europe will largely depend. The Germans gave their answer long ago : according to them nationality is constituted by race especially as manifested in language. But certain races only have the

privilege to create nationalities, chief amongst them being the German race. Therefore every foot of soil which was ever occupied by a Germanic race, or on which a Germanic language is still spoken, does *ipso facto* belong to the German nation, no matter what the feelings or sympathies of the inhabitants may be.

A different answer was given by Renan in a speech which he delivered in the University of Paris in 1882. So far as I am aware no better answer has yet been given. Renan showed that there is no such thing as a pure race, that the noblest countries, England, France, Italy, are those in which blood is most mixed. Even the Germans are a mixed race. Unity of language is useful, but not essential to the formation of nationality, as is well illustrated by Switzerland and Belgium. Religion has often proved a stronger bond than race and language, but even uniformity of religious belief is by no means indispensable. Nor is nationality a purely geographical question, as Englishmen well know.

“A nation is none of these things,” says Renan; “a nation is a soul and a spiritual principle, the resultant of a long historic past, of sacrifices and efforts made in common, and of a united will and aspiration in the present. To have done together great things in the past, to be minded to do great things in the present,

## 32 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

that is the essential condition for the existence of a nation."

This condition is amply fulfilled by France, and the French are beyond dispute a nation, even if it be proved that in the northern half thirty per cent. of the population have German blood in their veins.

Now I come to my second question: "Is the spirit of a nation capable of changing?" A nation is a living organism, or better, a living soul; and from the very definition, anything which is alive is susceptible of growth and development. Growth only ceases at death. Yet in spite of such growth the thing remains itself. A youth grows into a man, his thoughts, his convictions, as well as his appearance, undergo considerable changes, but he remains the same entity and continues to bear the influence of his innate disposition and even of his early training. This applies also to a nation. Hence the conflicting statements with which present-day literature has made us all familiar: (a) that the qualities and failings of the French are to-day what they were hundreds of years ago; (b) that a wonderful change has taken place in the French national character during the last thirty or forty years. In a sense both these statements are true. But, nevertheless, the surest way to understand the

mentality and characteristics of a nation is to study its history and its literature.

If we look back on the past, we cannot fail to be struck by the important part France has played in the history of civilisation. Her influence in the intellectual development of Europe is without parallel. Some nations have at times surpassed her in military skill and material wealth; but few, and for a brief space of years only, have ever succeeded in challenging the intellectual or spiritual hegemony she has exercised over Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire. After the great invasions of the Barbarians, when the ancestors of modern Germans with the characteristic savagery of their race, had laid low the magnificent civilisation of Rome, the inhabitants of Gaul were the first to recover from utter intellectual degradation. Of all the languages and dialects born of Latin, French was the first to attain literary perfection. The troubadours of the South sang of love and joy, whilst the minstrels of the North, living among a strongly Germanised population, extolled manly courage and exploits of arms. The masterpieces of the literature blossomed forth whilst the neighbouring countries were painfully struggling with translations and paraphrases. The superiority of French as a literary vehicle

## 34 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

became universally acknowledged. In every country of Europe men strove to master it, at all events sufficiently to be able to translate French works into their native idioms. But many actually wrote French, especially in Italy, where just before the appearance of Dante it was the acknowledged language of popular literature. Martino da Canale used it in compiling his Venetian Chronicle, and Brunetto Latini, the master of Dante, in the composition of his quaint treasure of human knowledge. These are two names among a score, and it would require a separate essay to deal adequately with the subject, and show what a great influence French thought has exercised in Italy from the twelfth century onwards. The love songs of the troubadours, the epics of Northern France, the Arthurian romances, even the English romance of Sir Beavis of Southampton penetrated into Italy in a French form and were eagerly read. Nay more, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Dante himself, received what might almost be termed a French education.

If we turn to Spain, the influence of France is almost as great as in Italy. Apart from the fact that a large French colony crossed the Pyrenees in the eighth century and introduced a French dialect into the Eastern part of the

Peninsula (Catalonia), French monks restored Christianity in Northern Spain, and French knights played an important part in helping the Spaniards to drive out the Arabs. France presided also at the birth of Spanish literature. The first Spanish mystery play, the source of the wonderful national drama, was translated from a French document; the Spanish epics, including the famous "Cantar de mio Cid," were inspired by French epics, and the early Spanish lyrics were an echo of the songs of Provence.

Even Germany received her early culture from the French. After Irish and other Christian missionaries had taught them their letters, the Germans became eager imitators of France. Except for a few isolated periods of spontaneous activity, Germany, in most questions of art and letters, remained the tributary of France down to the eighteenth century.

Was it a mere coincidence that the masterpieces of Old as well as those of Modern German literature were produced after periods in which French influence reached its maximum of intensity? The fact remains that Lessing, Goethe, Schiller (the greatest writers Germany has produced) received their earliest inspirations from France and made their first literary

## 36 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

attempts at a time when French alone was spoken at Potsdam and in fashionable society, at a time when Frederic of Prussia declared that German was fit only for the conversation of his grooms and his Pomeranian soldiers.

These facts the Germans cannot alter, however hard they may try to conceal them, however zealously they may endeavour to purge their vocabulary of French words. It is truly comical to see with what thoroughness they are carrying on a campaign for this purpose. Nothing is more common than to find in German newspapers lists of words which are tabooed and which every true German patriot is enjoined to banish from his speech. If his professors had not told him so he would never have suspected these words to be foreign, so thoroughly had he assimilated them. For example, the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of November 7, in all seriousness, urged its readers not to eat any chocolates bearing a foreign label (even if the article was a product of German manufacture), or to smoke any cigarettes if the word on the packet was spelt with a C instead of a Z ('*zigaretten*')—as if the change of spelling altered the nationality of the word! But unless the Germans are prepared to sacrifice on the altar of the Fatherland, Goethe, Schiller, and all that is best in their literature, they



cannot rid their language of the indelible marks of that tribute which for so many centuries they have paid to the intellectual superiority of France.

It is worth noting, too, that Scandinavia first came into contact with Western civilisation through the literary works of France, many of which were translated into Old Norse at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and in their turn contributed to call into existence an indigenous literature.

I need not even allude to the part which France has played in creating the language, and (in some measure also) the nationality of the people of the British Islands. The two or three centuries during which French was the official language of England did not fail to exert a profound influence upon the mentality of the English nation. But even when England had severed her political connection with the Continent, and a new literary idiom had come into being, the influence of France did not cease. Was not Chaucer, the Father of English poetry, a careful student of French literature? Did not Lydgate find his inspiration in French poems? Did not Gower write French verse with considerable skill?

Thus, the scantiest survey has shown us France presiding at the birth of almost every

## 38 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

modern European literature. Think what a different complexion the world would present, had France never existed ! Think how irreparable the loss and calamity, if for any reason her humanising influence should in future be weakened or altogether suppressed ! That at times she was the borrower, that some countries paid her back with usury, has never been questioned. The fact is self-evident, and serves to emphasise the close interdependence of Western nations, and to aggravate the crime of those who are responsible for the fratricidal conflict which threatens to decimate the population of Europe.

It may be that France has not retained the monopoly she possessed in the twelfth century (when French was practically a universal language), or the ascendancy which was still hers at the time of Louis XIV. ; but it seems to me evident that of late years her influence has again been on the increase, and that her defeats at the hand of Germany in 1870 in no way impaired her position in the realms of art and letters. But then the qualities of the intellect cannot be crushed by brute force.

The French are, and always were, a highly intellectual race. During the Roman occupation the Gauls distinguished themselves by the delight they took in the pleasures of the mind,

and this propensity they never wholly lost, even during the chaos which followed upon the Barbarian invasions. At the time when King Alfred complained that he could find no clerks in England able to read Latin, France possessed theologians, chroniclers, lawyers, who wrote the language with fluency, if not with elegance ; and the French shone not only in the lighter forms of literature, but also in scholarship and learning. Paris possessed the first great university in Western Christendom, and furnished the pattern and model, not only for the other universities of the land, but for those of Germany also. Insight, shrewdness, sound common sense have always been distinctive qualities of the French. At all periods of their history they have listened to the dictates of reason rather than those of sentiment. Starting from false premises they have fallen into grave errors ; but they have always been open to conviction, they have always listened to clear logical argument, especially when such argument was in harmony with their innate generosity. For the French have always been a generous people. In the days of their wildest ambitions they remained on the whole kind and chivalrous. In this respect especially they show themselves utterly different from their antagonists.

But let us look for some of their shortcomings.

From the study of their literature, one gathers the impression that the French (I speak, of course, of the average, and quite acknowledge there have been wonderful exceptions) have at no period of their history, at least not since the Crusades, been capable of deep religious faith. Running through the whole of their literature, there is a distinct repugnance for a religion based on the supernatural and the miraculous. This repugnance did not at once manifest itself with the violence and sarcasm with which Voltaire expressed it, but it appears unmistakably from the early Middle Ages onwards. In *Aucassin and Nicolette*, that jewel of Old French literature, Count Beaucaire informs his son Aucassin, that if he persists in courting Nicolette, the Saracen girl, his soul will never enter Paradise. Aucassin answers :

“What care I for Paradise ? I have no wish to enter there, if only I get Nicolette, my darling love. For to Paradise go none but these, as I shall tell : the aged priests, and the cripples who night and day cling to chapel altars, and the wretches who go about barefoot in ragged, threadbare cloaks with starved sickly faces. All these go to Paradise. But what care I for such company ? But gladly will I go to hell, for thither go fine scholars and gallant knights who died in tournament or battle, and brave squires and free-born men. With them will I go, and thither too go the fair and courteous

ladies who had two or three chevaliers apiece besides their own true lords, all gay with music, in their gold and silver and beautiful furs. With those will I go ; provided Nicolette, my sweet one, comes with me too."

The author may have spoken in jest, but Gaston Paris, who was a competent judge in these matters, saw in it a symptom of a widespread rebellion against orthodoxy. If Aucassin and Nicolette constituted an isolated example, we might well pause before expressing a definite judgment ; but the *fabliaux* and even the didactic literature which was written for the benefit of the middle classes, are full of coarse banter directed against the Church. Priests, monks, and women were the perpetual butts of mediæval satire. For the benefit of those who could not read, spectacular displays were provided in which the Church and its dignitaries were treated with scant respect. In certain seasons of the year the church was invaded by a crowd of larrikins who donned ecclesiastical vestments, made mock processions (singing vulgar parodies of the finest Church hymns), and entered the holy place, whilst the boldest of them would ascend the pulpit and deliver a "jolly sermon" to the intense amusement of the congregation.

This tendency to rail and mock at the sacred

and supernatural, though by no means confined to France, has nearly always been manifested by those writers who have been looked upon as most typically representative of the French spirit. It may be only on the surface, it may be a kind of naughtiness, springing from an irresistible desire to poke fun at every institution or person that lays claim to superiority. The Frenchman has always been endowed with an *esprit frondeur*. Even under the worst forms of absolutism he has seldom resisted the temptation of laughing at those in authority. It must, also, be admitted that an inexhaustible supply of wit specially fits him for such an exercise. I will not attempt to define Gallic wit. Besides, it baffles definition. It is not the same as humour. It is inseparable from the words. Perhaps it resides more in the form than in the thought. It strikes the ear and tickles the fancy. When administered in strong doses, it is apt to become tiring, at least to foreigners (French people have a more powerful digestion), but in moderate quantity it is delightful, exquisite. No writer in France was ever placed in the front rank who was not amply endowed with that quality. Of a coarser strain in Rabelais, more caustic in Voltaire, bordering on caricature in Daudet, it appears perhaps in its most perfect form in La Fontaine.

Wit is usually coupled with a certain artistic taste, a quality which the French possess to a remarkable degree, not only the *élite*, but every class of society. The ladies of the whole civilised world, including Germany, have long ago acknowledged the incomparable superiority of the French milliners in matters of taste and elegance. If the male section of the population have not shown the same enthusiastic admiration for Parisian fashion, it is due to their own lack of artistic sense. For in his respect the Frenchman is as well endowed as the Frenchwoman—as a matter of fact, I believe he designs most of the new dresses worn by the other sex. The Frenchman has a certain refinement, and *recherche* in all he wears, all he eats, nay in all he does, especially in what he does in public. This quality is nowhere more evident than among the French writers : from the academician down to the humblest journalist, all endeavour to express their thoughts in polished and elegant language.

These distinctive qualities of wit and good taste have been developed through social intercourse. It is a truism to say that the French are a sociable nation. While an Englishman is usually diffident at first, cold, and reserved, and requires the formality of an introduction before he will venture to exchange a few remarks

## 44 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

on the weather, or the war, a Frenchman will often take you into his confidence, or appear to do so, on the first occasion he meets you. His desire to exchange ideas is irresistible, or at least was so. Of late years, with the introduction of sports, there has been a marked tendency in France to adopt English ways. It is now no longer proper, I believe, to enter into conversation with a stranger who happens to travel in the same carriage with you. But on the whole the French are as fond of talking as ever. The words which Mme. de Staël penned a century ago are still true :

“ Speech in France is not simply a means of exchanging ideas and views or of conducting business ; it is an instrument on which the Frenchman loves to play, it acts on him as music does on some people and strong drinks on others.”

Even if to-day conversation no longer forms so important a feature of society life in France, still the long centuries of training the French have had in this accomplishment have left indelible marks on their mentality. They have given them *à propos*, quickness of thought, and repartee, qualities which, it is often argued, are inseparable from shallowness and superficiality. France has produced fewer scholars than Germany. Some Germans will even tell you



that she has produced none since the Renaissance. I quite agree—none of the heavier German type. French scholars write a clear literary style, and fear nothing more than the reproach of pedantry. But scholars of the highest order France has produced. Of late years, especially, the introduction of what is best in German methods (and every unbiassed mind will readily admit that there is much in them that is good), has secured excellent results on French soil. When a Frenchman adds to his natural clearness of view and perspicacity of style the industry and method of a German, he produces work of unsurpassed merits.

For France has ever been the home of original thought, of fertile ideas, which at times have revolutionised the whole civilised world; and yet, by one of those contradictions which are the essence of human nature, no nation is more enslaved to fashion, to conventionality, and to what is called *les convenances*. This is not a German-made theory; we have it on the authority of their own writers. Making due allowance for the fact that a Frenchman is much given to running down his own side, there is no doubt an element of truth in the statement of Leconte de Lisle: "No nation is more enslaved to preconceived ideas, more fond of routine, more scandalised by innovation." Is it not a fact

## 46 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

borne out by historical evidence that the French have always found it difficult to modify their institutions by a gradual process? When they want to make a change, they begin (or at least used to begin) by smashing up everything, and then build up afresh on the old foundation. In the end they often find themselves not far distant from the starting-point. It is the country of vested interests, where, as Baron Jouvencel once said, "it is more difficult to suppress a petty office than to upset a throne."

It is a country where, in spite of a republican régime, favouritism is rampant. Nothing is done without personal influence. An elementary teacher in the country seeking promotion must use influence to secure it. In the same way a distinguished writer with a European reputation must canvass in order to get into the French Academy. Still as everybody does it, the result is really the same as if no one did it, and as much as anywhere else merit and ability get their due reward. Nevertheless, to an Englishman the process might appear somewhat humiliating or, to say the least, uncongenial. Yet it springs from that innate desire of the Frenchman to be kind to others, especially to oblige and patronise his friends.

The fondness of the French parent is proverbial. He lives for his children, often spoils

them, finds positions for his sons and husbands for his daughters, and his one ambition is to leave them at his death a fortune substantially larger than the one he himself inherited from his father.

It is this kindness of the Frenchman which has often been mistaken for weakness and moral cowardice. The fear of creating a public scandal, and the attempt to hush up what should have been frankly and openly thrashed out, has harmed the reputation of France abroad and injured the position of her government at home. But the spectacle offered by the whole nation in the present crisis has disposed for ever of the suspicion that France was lacking in moral courage. The attitude of the nation has been courageous and dignified.

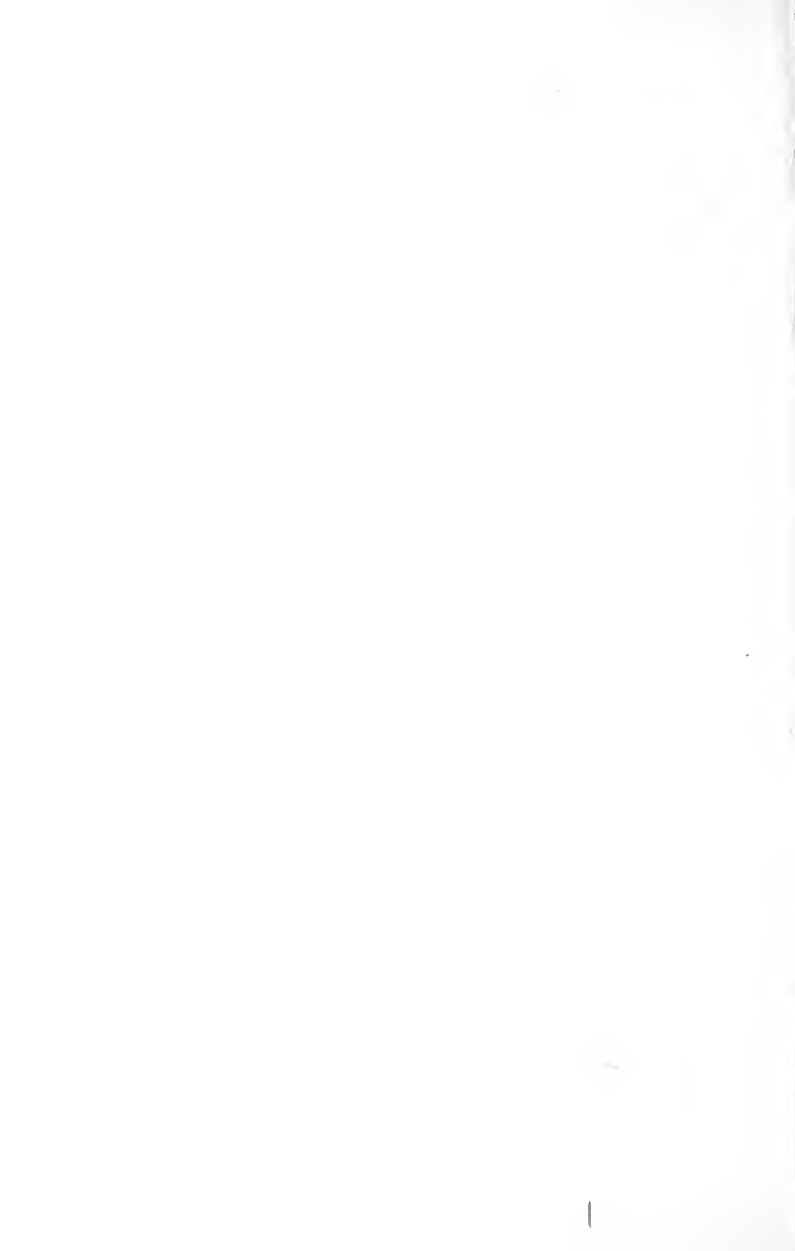
I had the privilege of passing through France at the most critical period in the history of the present war, early in September, when the German advance seemed irresistible, when French forts were being scattered like sandhills, when Paris was preparing for a siege, and the suburbs were being cleared to enable the capital to make full use of its defences. Fugitives came flocking west by thousands, leaving pillaged and burning homesteads behind them. Wounded soldiers poured into the city in a ceaseless stream. Five long trains filled with them fol-

lowed one another on that Sunday morning on which we arrived in Paris,—trains bearing no resemblance to the comfortable and up-to-date hospital trains which are now running in England and in France also. The carriages were mainly cattle-trucks, empty goods vans, returning from the front hurriedly strewn with straw and packed with wounded soldiers.

Everywhere signs that France was not ready for the titanic struggle, that courage would not avail against the scientific preparation of the foe, that Paris must inevitably fall. Yet it was wonderful to note the grim determination expressed on every face. No boasting, no noise : France had become a silent country. It was not terror which paralysed speech. It was the magnitude of the task, and the clear realisation that the very existence of the nation was at stake, and that nothing short of a supreme effort could redeem it.

That supreme effort the whole nation was determined to make, determined to fight to the bitter end. A nation animated by such a spirit is and ever will be unconquerable ; and if it is true that a war, undertaken against foreign aggression, and for the cause of liberty, in spite of the misery it brings in its train, invariably purifies and strengthens the collective soul of a nation, we can look forward to a greater and

nobler France, a France both able and willing to discharge, even more worthily than in the past, the all-important part she has been called upon to play in the history of civilisation.



### III

## THE SPIRIT OF RUSSIA

BY ALEXIS ALADIN

THE spirit of a nation manifests itself in so many forms that it is beyond hope to give in a short space even a mere enumeration of the component elements. In the graceful dancing of a Pavlova and the scientific achievement of a Mendeleef, or in the symphony of a Tschai-kowsky, the national spirit of Russia flashes, no less than in the victories of the Russian Commander-in-chief. But, as at the present moment my native country is engaged in a struggle for existence against a foreign invader, one is forced, when speaking of the Spirit of the Nation, to consider only those fundamental springs of emotion which give a man power to make the supreme sacrifice of his life.

The first question that arises is—How do the Russians stand in their relationship to their native land? The great mass of the Russian

## 52 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

people—perhaps over ninety per cent. of them—have not as yet attained that degree of civilisation in which a man asks himself—“What do I get out of the land to which I belong?” Even more: they do not consider such an inquiry desirable. They are born in the land, grow and live in it, without thinking or reflecting; they received the land from their fathers, they take it for granted that it will go to their children. They are born and grow, and the land forms them, in the words of Kipling:

“Scent of smoke in the evening,  
Smell of rain in the night;  
The hours, the days, and the seasons,  
Order their souls aright.”

Such are the masses of the Russian people.

But what of the last ten per cent., the upper classes, the leaders of the people, men of education, knowledge, experience? They learn the history of their country in the schools, they see the long martyrdom of their nation through which it grows to maturity.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries show a conglomeration of Russian republican towns, young, boisterous, trading, fighting each other, still more fighting on the south-eastern frontier for their existence against the hordes of the enemy which in successive waves roll out of



Asia under the names of Petchenegi, Kazari, Polovtsi, etc.

The thirteenth century brought to Russia the terrible scourge of the Tartar invasion. Nearly the whole country was overrun by the pitiless nomads. The fairest towns were in ruins, the population decimated, and trade and development brought to a standstill. Only in the north-east one city, the great republic of Novgorod with its dependencies, more through the aid of its natural defences of forests and swamps than from any other cause, succeeded in maintaining its integrity and partial independence. The Germans of the time, under the organisation of the Teutonic Order, chose that moment of national calamity to swoop on the defenceless suffering land of Russia, with the desire of extinguishing the last spark of national existence. With the benediction of Pope Gregory ix., his son-in-law Birger led the Teutonic Knights and their mercenaries to the conquest of Novgorod the Great. He insolently wrote to Alexander Nevsky : " I am already in your provinces ; defend yourselves if you can." The army of Novgorod the Great took up the challenge. Alexander Nevsky with his own lance imprinted his seal on the face of Birger, and showed that the citizens could defend themselves. The name of Nevsky was given

to Alexander for this victory over the Teutonic Crusaders. Yet this proud conqueror of the Teutonic Knights had to journey far into the steppes of Asia to find the Great Khan of the Tartars and kneel before him to save his people from utter annihilation. On his way back to Novgorod he died. The Metropolitan Cyril announced the nation's loss to the people assembled in the great cathedral at the close of the liturgy: "My children, the Sun of our Russian land has set." "We are lost," they cried, and burst into wild lamentations.

The Tartar domination lasted over two hundred years. For the sake of throwing off the yoke of the invader the people of Russia had to sacrifice every tradition of their previous development in free republican cities. To save the women from the searching eyes of the Tartar emissaries the Russians had to shut their wives and daughters in the *terems*. To form a strong nucleus of national existence they had to seek the favour of Tartar khans by slandering and even fighting one another; for more than once Russian blood flowed on Russian swords. But the spirit of the nation was not dead. Out of the deep it arose at last, terrible in the memories of the sufferings undergone, flashing in the burning desire to face the invader arms in hand, and to throw him back into Asia whence he came.

On the borders of the river Kalkha in 1380 the first decisive battle between the Tartars and the regenerated Russians was fought. The Russians were victorious. But the Tartar domination was not ended yet. Only a few years later the victor of Kalka, Dmitri Donskoi, looking at Moscow, pillaged and burned, exclaimed, "Our fathers who never conquered the Tartars were less wretched than we." Not until the close of the fifteenth century did all danger from the Tartars disappear.

A century more and we see the land of Russia once again overrun, this time by Poles. In the very Kremlin of Moscow a Polish pretender sat on the throne in the guise of a Russian Tsar. Complete disorder and desolation reigned in the land, all bonds of organised society seemed to be loosed. But once again the spirit of the nation manifested itself, this time in the outlying provinces of Russia. The national Church and the Merchants came to the rescue. Under the leadership of the descendants of the fighting princes, a national army was formed and the land was cleared of the intruders.

Another century passes, and again Russia, this time under the command of one of her greatest Emperors, Peter the Great, faces the perils of a struggle for existence, fighting against the best army of Europe of that time, that of

the Swedes under Charles XII. The issue was decided at Poltava on the 8th July 1709. The gravity of the crisis may be judged by the peroration of Peter the Great to his army : " The moment has come, the fate of your country is about to be decided. You must not think that you are fighting for Peter now. No, you are fighting for the Empire that has been entrusted to Peter, for your country, for your orthodox Faith, and for your Church of God. As for Peter, be assured that he is ready to sacrifice his life, if only Russia may live glorious and prosper."

With the battle of Poltava we have arrived at the turning-point of Russian history. We have passed in brief outline through her tragic story, and only once more in years to come her centre of national existence passed into the hands of a conqueror, Napoleon, a victory which brought nemesis to the invader, and a fresh crystallisation of the Russian national spirit. In the words of Pushkin :

" Even as a sword is tempered and made fine,  
By dint of hammer blows that shiver crystal,  
So by the pangs of long-drawn chastisement,  
And buffetings of Fate with patience borne,  
Russia grew strong."

Is it surprising that the people of Russia and their leaders love their native land with simple,

unreasoning, blind devotion, with the same feeling as a man loves his mother : “ Good woman or bad woman, she is my mother ” ?

But who are the Russians, the inhabitants of this land of Russia ? Roughly the Russian people may be divided into two numerically unequal groups. The first and more numerous would be more or less of pure Slavonic origin ; contemplative by nature, with a leaning to introspection, hesitating, delicate to the very verge of shyness, even ready to accept humiliation as the leading motto of life. As the highest incarnation of that type we may take Count Leon Tolstoy. Almost with a single bound he leaped into the ranks of the best classical writers of Russia. A few years’ work made him a spiritual leader of the Russian people. The age of maturity finds him one of the religious lights of Russia. He sacrificed his worldly possessions, his literary fame, his leadership in spiritual and religious life, and tried to lose himself in the ordinary grey crowd of Russian peasants with the sole desire :

“ To learn and discern, of his brother the clod,  
Of his brother the brute, and his brother the God.”

The second group of the Russian people cannot boast a pure origin. They are the result of a mixture of Slavonic blood with that of Norsemen, Tartars, and Turco-Finnish tribes. They

are men of action, fierce determination, promptness of decision, erring frequently as all men of action do. As an illustration of the tendencies which Norse and Tartar blood brought to the Slavonic character we may take a few passages from the instruction left by Vladimir Monomaque, the Great Russian Prince of the twelfth century, who may be considered the father of Russia :

“ I have made in all 33 campaigns, to say nothing of others of less importance. I have made nineteen Treaties of Peace with the Polovtsi. I have taken prisoners at least 100 of their princes and set them free again, and have put to death more than 200 by casting them into the rivers. No one ever travelled quicker than I. I have left Tchernigov in the early morning and reached Kiew before evening. I have caught wild horses in the midst of dense forests, and tethered them together with my own hands. How often have I been charged down by buffaloes, gored by the horns of Stags, trampled under foot by Elands ; a wild Boar once pulled my sword from my belt, and a Bear tore to pieces my saddle after throwing my horse down under me. How often have I been thrown from my horse in my youth, but I thought nothing of the dangers to which I exposed myself and the wounds and bruises I received on my head, legs and arms. For the Lord watched over me. . . . It is neither fasting nor a monastic life that will win you eternal life, but good works. Forget not the poor, but cherish them. . . . Be a father to

the orphan, and judge the case of the widow for yourselves. Put to death neither the innocent nor the guilty, for there is nothing more sacred than the life and soul of a Christian. . . . Love your wives, but let them have no power over you. . . . When you have learned a useful thing, strive to preserve it in your memory, and cease not to seek instruction. . . . My father learned five languages without leaving his palace, a knowledge which all foreigners admire in us."

Whether of pure Slavonic origin, or of mixed blood of Slavs, Norsemen and Tartars, the Russians are always deeply religious. What is the religion of the Russian? Officially the great masses of the people are supposed to be orthodox Christians; unofficially in time of peace they are not unlike other people, frankly pagan. They honestly consider Mondays as bad days to start work on, and even when attacking Germans they prefer sometimes to do the job on Sunday nights. To see the new moon through glass is no less disastrous in Russia than in England. And the number thirteen brings nearly the same awful consequences in both regions. Perhaps in Russia there are left more ancient gods than in Britain, not only living but reigning. In every household the spirit Guardian of the family looks, even now, after the welfare of its members. If the husband is good to his wife and does

## 60 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

not beat his children too much, the spirit of the house would certainly be benevolent to him. His horses and cattle would be well looked after and cared for, and no one would be surprised to find in the morning the mane of the best horse beautified into tresses by the spirit. And in the forests, especially in spring-time, the gay Sylvan King amuses himself by leading wayfarers round and round and round, laughing at them, not a terrifying laugh, but the mirthful contented laugh of a joyous god. In the rivers beautiful spirits of drowned girls, transformed into water-maidens, live and watch for mortals to come and be enticed into the depth without hope of returning.

But when the war-drum beats and the man is called to go and die for his country, the gay world of pagan gods vanishes into the background, and the Christian faith represented by the Orthodox Church comes to the front. The highest form of the conception of Christianity in Russia may be judged by this quite inadequate translation of the beautiful lines of Derjavin :

“ Oh Thou who dwellest in space that has no bounds,  
Who givest life to all that moves,  
Who wert before all time was,  
Whose veiled face in triple majesty is hid,  
Who fillest all, embraceth all, livest in all and all  
upholdeth,  
Whom we name God.”



Add that in Russia, during the last fifty years, there have been enrolled over twenty-five million members of dissenting bodies, that is, of men who try to form a conception of the Christian God according to their own lights, and it will be seen that Christianity is a living religion to the Russian people.

The Russian soldier does not go to the battle under the intoxication of religious frenzy like a dervish. Before the battle opens he comes to his priest with the simplicity of a child, confesses to him his sins and shortcomings, and through him commends his soul to his Maker. After that he considers that his duty before God is fully discharged and he is ready to die.

What of the fighting capacities of the Russians? Born and bred on the vast plains of Eastern Europe they are not like mountaineers, they do not love fighting for fighting's sake. They are naturally peaceful and even perhaps a little sluggish till the moment for action comes. But the winters are long, the air cold and bracing, and it is not to be wondered at that scenes like this of my childhood occur all over the length and breadth of Russia.

I happened to be born in a street called Little Horse Street. Next to us was another street

## 62 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

called Horse Street. For some unaccountable reason we boys in our Little Horse Street thoroughly believed that the whole of what is called horse-play, and a great deal of foul play, was incarnated in the boys of Horse Street. So fired by the desire to bring a little more culture to our erring companions from the neighbouring street, and teach them manners, we would descend in skirmishing order to the bottom of the hollow of the hills which separated our respective streets, where we would find our friends quite ready to give us a warm reception, and the fight would begin. Soon we would discover that we really needed help from our big brothers, who in their turn would call in reinforcements of the elder men with silver in their hair as a last resource, as some sort of "National Guard," and the battle royal would go on till both sides were thoroughly tired, and by mutual agreement we would postpone it to the next convenient date.

The Russians are not born fighters like the Gurkhas; but when their country is menaced by a horde, even of highly Kultiured gentlemen of the German type, when they see that their homes are no longer safe, that their women and children are in danger, then reluctantly they go forward to meet the guests, give them a reception of the warmest, and fight to the

last for their native land, their religion, their homes, and their very existence as a free people.

The character of the Russian fighting man excludes any possibility on the part of officers of leading their soldiers from behind; and the Russian officers in all past wars, as well as in the present one with Germany, were and now are the real leaders of their troops, encouraging the soldiers by personal example in disregarding danger, by taking every possible care of the men under their command, and by inspiring the men with their own spirit of determination.

Many times my English friends have remarked to me: "But you Russians have learned a lot since the Japanese War." The same idea in different forms has been expressed in the British Press, even in the most serious organs. Without denying that the Russian Army learned a great deal during the Russo-Japanese War, I would point out that the real explanation of the difference in the behaviour of the Russian armed forces during the Japanese War and in the present war, lies in something far deeper than military experience. The war with Japan was a war of the Russian Government at the time. In dimensions it was a colonial expedition on a large scale, not involving in any way the safety of the existence of the Russian Empire. The masses of the people were not vitally inter-

## 64 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

ested in the war, they never understood, or even tried to understand, the reasons for it. The present conflict with Germany is of an entirely different nature. During the last forty years Germany has deliberately sacrificed the best of her national energies in preparing the necessary means to fight for the domination of the world. The German people, corrupted by the easy looting of France in 1870, developed a mushroom growth of philosophy, history, poetry, and statesmanship, preaching a doctrine of the right of the naked sword. The doctrine itself was not new and least of all original; it was a poor reiteration by the leaders of a new-born Empire, the parvenu among the great nations, of the principles which dominated Europe centuries ago.

But while Germany was straining every nerve and sinew to equip her army to fight the world, Russia was passing through a difficult phase of internal reform. She was caught by Germany unawares, scarcely prepared to defend herself, and certainly not prepared for any aggressive action. The struggle against Germany became under these circumstances a danger to the very existence of the Russian Empire. The masses of Russia grasped the situation and made this war with Germany a war of the people. In that lies the explanation of the different character of

the new Russian armies, and of their behaviour as compared with that exhibited in the conflict of Russia with Japan.

Germany chose cunningly the time for her declaration of war. The Russian Government had not been very wise in trying to cut down to the utmost the concessions made to the people in 1906. Their endeavours produced a deep discontent in the middle and lower classes of Russia. The town and district municipalities and Zemstvos by sulking showed the Government that they were not very much pleased with their reactionary measures. The Merchant Associations went a step further—they met the representatives of the Government at the time of the Nijni Novgorod Fair and told them that the economical life of the country was stifled, and that sufficient latitude was not given for individual efforts. The working classes went still further, and by a series of strikes, culminating in one on the largest scale at Petrograd, they showed in a very tangible way what they thought of the policy of the Government. The strike movement was slowly creeping from Petrograd to Moscow and southern industrial towns. By all appearances, one could expect in Russia another social upheaval, even more serious than in 1905–06, when, strong as the revolutionary movement was, the Russian

## 66 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

working- and middle-classes entirely lacked leadership and cohesion.

This state of affairs in Russia was perfectly known to Germany. There were as many German spies in the Empire as in Great Britain, if not more ; but, fortunately for both countries, the spies were only of the usual type of hirelings, capable of measuring roads, stealing plans of forts, calculating the number of guns, and noting the names of regiments, but entirely unable to form a judgment on the most important feature in the life of a people—the spirit of the nation. The Germans considered the Russians and the Slavs in general to be anarchistic by nature and devoid of any sense of statesmanship. They thought that the democracy of Russia would not grasp the seriousness of the situation and would indulge in internecine warfare, while their country was in danger. It is needless to say that they were entirely wrong in their surmises. Directly war was declared by Germany on Russia, the Russian democracy, irrespective of parties, sections, and creeds, rallied round the Government and their representative, the Tsar, without hesitation or delay. No conditions were put forward, no bargaining took place. The workmen who were on strike in Petrograd (over a hundred and fifty thousand men), and who

were already on the point of building barricades, returned to work as one man, and helped the troops to entrain for the frontier on the first day of the declaration of war.

Water, when at a very low temperature, may be converted into solid ice in a single second by a sudden shock. Just so these loosely organised bands of fierce opponents of His Imperial Majesty were spontaneously crystallised into the solid serried ranks of his equally fierce defenders, and Nicholas II. was transformed, as by an enchanter's wand, from the head of the Government, unpopular because of reactionary tendencies, into a Sovereign invested with the real majesty and power of a representative of the Russian people. At the time of the Japanese War, Nicholas II. was practically a prisoner in his own palace, and when he moved from one town to another whole army corps had to be mobilised to guard him on the way. Since the declaration of the present war he has been untrammelled in his movements, and an enthusiastic reception is given to him by all ranks of people wherever he appears. It is a striking proof of the unity of the Russian nation in their determination to guard their country, the heritage of their ancestors, against alien attack.

Great Britain and Russia are both great enough to enable their people to enjoy the

## 68 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

luxury of internal conflicts in time of peace. But external enemies ought to have known that at the moment of their appearance on the frontier all internecine strife and struggle would cease, and that they would have to face united peoples.

The war with Germany, terrible as it is, involving losses beyond computation, has brought to the land of Russia, with all its miseries, one great blessing. Broadly speaking, before the war Russians were divided into two camps—on one side the Government and their adherents, conservative by nature, reactionary by the force of circumstances; on the other, the young, creative, progressive elements of the nation, striving to make the country go forward, perhaps faster than it could. Neither of the two sections was sufficiently strong to impose its will on the other. Nearly half the forces of the nation were rendered inactive, and more than this, there was no possibility of their becoming active in a natural way. The war declared by Germany provided a common ground of co-operation for both sections, the conservative governing party and the young progressive democracy of Russia. It is for the democracy of England, with its centuries of experience, to come forward boldly, and to help by advice, influence, and support, the democracy of Russia; to preserve, when peace is concluded, or rather



when peace is imposed on Germany by the Allied Powers on their own terms, this common ground of co-operation with the Government which is a reality at the present moment.

Only on very broad and inadequate lines have I been able to consider the spirit rather of the Russian nation than of the Russian Empire. Poland, the most gifted and brilliant if unfortunate daughter of the Slavonic family, I have not mentioned at all ; neither do I bring forward the cause of Finland, smarting and suffering from reactionary legislation of late years ; nor have I said a word of the martyrdom of the Jewish people. All peoples in the Russian Empire not belonging to the Russian nation, I have had to leave out of the discussion. For the question of the component parts of the Empire is of such complexity that it could only be treated specially and in adequate detail. But this much may be said. The Russian democracy has never had any hostile feelings towards smaller nationalities, and has always helped them to the best of its ability ; [and there is no reason to suppose that in the future this attitude of the Russian democracy will change in the slightest degree, or deviate from the traditions of the past.]

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## IV

# THE SPIRIT OF BELGIUM

BY PROFESSOR PAUL HAMELIUS, D. ÈS L.

## I

So much has lately been said and written in praise of Belgium, that a Belgian should make an attempt to be impartial when addressing British readers on the spirit of his own people. As no man's character is understood by those who overlook his defects, so a true account of a nation's spirit must take note of the national shortcomings.

In the inquiries about the Belgian soul, *l'âme belge*, instituted before the month of August 1914, the great variety of the answers has disclosed a variety of views and sentiment quite surprising for such a small community. Sectional feeling pitted the partisans of the French ways and language against those of the Flemish or Dutch, and the supporters of Roman Catholic ideals against those of freethought.

## 72 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

The close unanimity which has suddenly asserted itself under the stress of foreign invasion was not apparent in the days of peace. Still a number of thinkers had tried to give a rational account of our century-old cohesion ; and among those accounts two, that of the historian, Henri Pirenne, and that of the lawyer and man of letters, Edmond Picard, stand out as especially noticeable.

M. Pirenne dwells mainly on Belgium's position between the Latin and Germanic world, and on the close ties of language, of tradition, and of commerce which bind her to both. He concludes that she is called to act as an interpreter of each to the other, and as an agent for the interchange of ideas and experiences between them. These facts are obvious enough, but they are just as true of Switzerland and Alsace-Lorraine, which occupy other regions of the same borderland. We may well wonder whether such an intermediate position would favour the growth of originality and independence. Besides, is it possible to conceive a definite character, individual or collective, that would be founded on such negative data as likeness to two outsiders who are themselves unlike one another ?

M. Edmond Picard's reading of the national spirit, while running on somewhat similar lines,

leads up to more definite conclusions. The power to avoid extremes, to strike a sensible average course, seems to him the fundamental peculiarity of his people. If set against the Frenchman's close logic and the German's heavy method, the Belgian's common sense and mother wit, his avoidance of the pitfalls of subtlety and pedantry, mark him as a shrewd judge of facts and men. The defects corresponding to these qualities have been hit off by the poet Charles Baudelaire, for some time a resident in Brussels, when he wrote that Belgians do their thinking in herds, *ils pensent en bande*. Common sense is apt to descend into commonplace ; and an eye too constantly bent on the obvious is in danger of failing to gauge the heights and depths beyond its immediate range.

All the native historians have been struck by the fact that the gregariousness singled out by Baudelaire as the essential Belgian virtue or vice has moulded the institutions and manners of Brabant and Flanders for centuries. Guilds of artisans and traders, sworn brotherhoods of archers and cross-bowmen, municipal corporations and benches of *scabini*, wielded power and shaped and administered the law. The buildings in which they held their meetings and kept their records, town- and cloth-halls, belfries, and houses of corporations, are to this day the most

## 74 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

noticeable monuments in the cities. Ecclesiastical functions and social pleasure are conducted by clubs and fraternities ; in a word, all national interests, from the humblest to the highest, are managed by organised groups of citizens. This accounts for the party spirit and clannish divisions which have always hidden from superficial observers the fundamental unity of Belgium. It also accounts for the toughness with which the nation can face trials and even apparent disaster : no citizen so humble but he feels and acts as one of the guardians of the national life. Reasoning has no power over such a traditional feeling : its foundations are habit and instinct, and it selects its aims by intuition. It will firmly grasp facts, and rise to heights of anger and joy which transcend the individual's interests, and are rendered possible only by communal exaltation.

### II

If we look for a great sample to show us at a glance what can be but imperfectly explained in abstract terms, we shall see that the world has recognised one Belgian as the representative national hero : Peter Paul Rubens, the vastness of whose gifts and achievements can only be realised after repeated visits to the great art

collections of Europe. He defies the prejudices of the partisans of Fra Angelico's somewhat cold purity, and of those of Botticelli's morbid subtlety, and stands out as the spokesman of a healthy and superabundant vitality.

Yet neither of the two sections of modern Belgian thought may claim him wholly ; for he has been a faithful servant of the Roman Catholic Church, by whom he was patronised, as well as a bold interpreter of pagan sensuality. That the painter of the " Descent from the Cross " in Antwerp Cathedral should also have given to the world his drunken Bacchanalians and Processions of Silenus startles us at first as an unpardonable self-contradiction. Yet the underlying unity in which it finds its justification will become apparent if we contrast Rubens' work, as a whole, with such a monument of Puritan art as, for instance, the poetry of John Milton.

An imaginary conversation between those two creative geniuses who lived in the same age, would help us to define the Belgian spirit by the study of contrasts. In such a conversation, Milton must unhesitatingly admit that the lusciousness of the Renaissance enters into many a page even of *Paradise Lost*, into the description of the Garden of Eden and the creation of Eve. He must then proceed to

reproach Rubens with having glossed over the moral problems and the spiritual aspirations that lie at the very root of Christianity, to rebuke him for debasing religion by an idolatrous worship of saints, and for honouring paganism by a glorification of the false deities. To this Rubens would reply that even the Crucifixion, the gloomiest scene in sacred history, is but the preface to a fresh and final triumph of life, and that all the tragic divisions and struggles of this earth are to be solved in the transfiguration of the Hereafter. The transfiguration of the body, which will be part of the beatitudes of Heaven, is foreshadowed on his canvas, and he paints the Creation in its pristine harmony, such as it came from the Maker's hands before the Fall.

This argument has brought us back to our former statement—that instinct and intuition are the leading forces in the Belgian soul. Both in his religious and in his mythological painting, Rubens is, as Verhaeren has rightly said, the high priest of life; and the later phases of Belgian art have mostly been interpretations of the full-blooded joy of living, seen especially through the medium of colour and light.

Even the novelists and poets of nineteenth-century Belgium, both Flemish and French, have learned their craft in the school of the



painters. They visualise scenes and actors, and strive to understand and express the spirit by picturing the attitudes of the body and its relations to the surrounding matter and atmosphere. They may not always succeed in being simple in their art ; but they constantly aim at discovering and bringing home to their readers direct thoughts and elemental feelings, and at keeping simplicity before their eyes as a counsel of perfection.

### III

The author who revived, or rather created, a fresh Belgian literature, the Flemish novelist Henri Conscience, is honoured on the pedestal of his statue in Antwerp with the dedication : " To him who taught our people to read." This inscription not only sounds the keynote of his vast body of romances and tales, which are truly of the people and for the people, it also points the direction in which the French and Flemish poetry and prose of Belgium have developed after him. Though they may escape the grasp of the half-educated, through the richness of their vocabulary, the Belgian writers seldom fail to deal with the manners and feelings of the humbler ranks of society. Their typical hero will be found to be a child of nature, taught chiefly by the surrounding landscape and social

## 78 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

environment, sharing the views and habits of those among whom he was born. He will be raised above them by a higher sensitiveness, not by a better trained intellect or a wider experience. He will be what, according to Milton, great poetry ought to be, and what Belgian life at its best aims at being, "simple, sensuous, and passionate." Simple and naïve in judgment and action, sensuous in the apprehension of facts and in the enjoyment of sights, sounds, and tastes, passionate in obeying the natural stir of emotion, which it is not at pains to conceal or repress. No better defence of the theory of art underlying the practice of the half-pagan Rubens could be devised than that which is implied in the formula coined by the great Puritan poet.

This faith in the instinctive, impulsive, forces in man, which we have recognised as the peculiar note of the Belgian modes of existence, shows itself in social habits and politics as well as in art. It was perhaps more universal, but less self-conscious, in the earlier period of the kingdom's independence from the revolution of 1830 to the Franco-German War of 1870. A great change was produced about that date by the industrial development which turned a secluded, nearly mediæval, community, provincial and even parochial in its adherence to inherited

creeds and methods of government, into a beehive of feverish labour, and one of the world's most active producers of coal and iron. While economic evolution was widening the national outlook, a body of French writers and orators, mostly refugees from the Second Empire, were sowing the seeds of a fresh literary growth. In his charming autobiographical sketch, *La vie belge*, Camille Lemonnier has told us how the quiet little city of Brussels wondered at the ways of those strange and illustrious guests, and how their presence stirred the hearts of young men to literary ambition.

The keynote of Belgian politics before 1870 has been a strong consciousness of the freedom of self-government, obtained through an armed rising in 1830, and proudly maintained as an example and a lesson for less advanced Continental nations, who were still in the throes of the struggle against absolute monarchy. That self-government was distinguished from the chartered freedom of former centuries chiefly by being national, and common to all provinces and municipalities, while the states and communes of earlier ages were strictly local and limited in their privileges. Notwithstanding the need for centralisation, felt more and more in these later times, the town or village council, headed by its burgomaster and aldermen, is

## 80 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

still the nearest and dearest representative of every Belgian citizen's liberty. The frequent recurrence of elections, and the great importance attached to their results, favoured partly organisation and discipline, and fostered the gregarious and clannish habit of "thinking in herds."

The greatest writer of that earlier period was undoubtedly Henri Conscience. He combined the humanitarian fervour of the revolutionist with the pious sentimentality of the antiquarian, and welded the various elements of patriotism, landscape, traditions and political reform, into a glorious picture of the national past and present. The idyllic note which is so pervasive in his homely writings, was also felt in the quiet and steady parliamentary progress of his time. In the sister art of painting, Henri de Braekeleere created a world of peaceful content in his luminous interiors, city views, and garden landscapes, instinct with the mere joy of being. The artists who tried to emulate Rubens' great epic style were less successful: Wiertz's large canvases attract few admirers nowadays beyond the foreign tourists. Only Leys, a student of miniatures and primitive masters, reached a powerful composition and wealth of colour that have secured a lasting reputation for his work. If we pursue the comparison between letters

and painting, we shall connect de Braekeleere's scenes of domestic joy with Conscience's tender sketches of humble life, and Leys' historical frescoes and pictures with the novelist's historical romances, among which the most famous is *The Lion of Flanders*.

#### IV

The sheltered, uneventful period of Belgium's beginnings as an independent state came to an end in consequence of the building of railways, of the opening of the port of Antwerp to international traffic, of the working of coal mines, and of the establishment of steel and iron works and other industries. Old creeds began to be questioned and new needs to be felt. Belgian letters, which had been stimulated by the presence of writers from France, responded to the call by an attempt to assert their independence from French classicism.

Charles de Coster resolved to picture the sixteenth century, the age of the great religious and civil wars, in a vast historical romance, in the centre of which he placed, as his hero, Tyl Ulenspieghel (Owlglass), the incarnation of the bold humorous mother-wit of Flanders, in her struggles against Spanish tyranny. He even revived obsolete words and phrases, and

wrote an archaic form of French, intended to be racier and more picturesque than the style of the Paris Academy. He vindicated the rebels of the Netherlands as the champions, against priestcraft and statecraft, of that right to possess one's own soul and body which we have found to be the principle of the art of Rubens.

The same great national tradition has inspired the work of Camille Lemonnier, the most prolific and representative of the Belgian novelists who have used the French tongue. As de Coster revived the phraseology and described the manners of the sixteenth century, so Lemonnier has adopted words and phrases borrowed from the Walloon dialects to impart fresh colour to his prose, in his description of the scenery and of the ways and speech of the various Belgian provinces. Poachers, goat-herds, farmers and shopkeepers are the characters in his numerous stories, the collection of which forms a true and lively account of the customs of the countryside and of the smaller towns. Their coarser deeds and utterances are not softened or concealed, as they are in *Conscience*, and Lemonnier may in those respects claim kinship with Jan Steen and with the painters of kermesses, of satyrs, and of fauns.

The writers of Flemish fiction who acknowledge

Stijn Streuvels as their leader are also students of the manners of the peasantry and of subconscious psychology. A tragic undertone akin to that of Breughel's rural scenes runs even through the grotesque or coarse incidents which they are at no pains to avoid. Fate and circumstance often direct the course of events in their stories, drive the poor humans along as their tools and victims, and sometimes land them in humorous discrepancies between will and deeds.

In these several ways the strain of feeling of which Rubens is the highest spokesman has been continued from the seventeenth century into the twentieth, and from painting to literature. Nevertheless it would be a mistake to ignore other strains of the national tradition, such as the mysticism that has inspired the theologian Jan van Ruusbroec in his religious writings, and the painter Jan van Eyck in the composition of his triptich, "The Adoration of the Lamb." When the national mind began to expand about 1870, partly through the advent of foreign influences, when Leys had discovered models for his paintings among the masters who had preceded the Renaissance, the time came for literary men to turn away from the luscious, fleshy vigour of the school of Antwerp and to aim at a deeper spirituality.

## 84 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

Flemish verse was first renovated through the powerful genius of the priest and poet Guido Gezelle, who has most intimately fused his feeling for landscape with his own lyrical fervour, and has attuned his language to the deepest and subtlest harmonies. As de Coster rebelled against the strict purism of the French Academy, Gezelle rejected the linguistic predominance of Holland, and raised his native West-Flemish dialect, which had since the Middle Ages lost its status as a literary medium, to the dignity of majestic and impassioned verse. His fame must needs be confined to the narrow circle of readers who are familiar with the language of the Netherlands, but among them he rightly ranks with the greatest and most admired of our writers.

The world at large is better acquainted with the names of Maeterlinck, in whose books it is difficult to trace a specifically Belgian note, and of Verhaeren, who has always striven to remain faithful to the spirit of his native land. Maeterlinck as a thinker owes much to the philosophy of Ruusbroec, but his appeal is not to one particular nation. Even in Verhaeren's poetry, a vigorous, lyrical individuality asserts itself so much, that he speaks rather for himself than for the mass of the people. No doubt the Flemish scenery and characters are there,



but in a somewhat arbitrary selection, and in a peculiarly coloured atmosphere. Superstition is more rampant, animal spirits more unbridled, terror and lust more tempestuous, at least in the earlier poems, than in the productions of the novelists, who are bound to follow realities more faithfully. The gentler affections, and a closer study of facts and thoughts, prevail in the later, maturer verse. To a loving understanding of Belgium there is no safer guide than Verhaeren, if allowance be made for the overflowing energies of the poetical temperament, and if the more restful later poems be set by the side of the violent earlier ones.

One aspect of modern life, the toiler's patient strength, weariness, and suffering, was not foreseen either in Rubens' passionate scheme of feelings, or in the mystic's contemplative mood. It has come more and more to the front as mines have been opened and works and mills erected, and as the agricultural community of 1830 has been turned into the industrial society of later years. It has found its artistic interpretation in the sculpture of Constantin Meunier. Meunier has discarded the prettiness and attitudinising of the Renaissance for a bald severity of line and of pose and a quiet strength that is in perfect keeping with the sombre scenery of the colliery districts, and with the whole tenor

## 86 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

of the labourer's fate. He testifies to the ability of the Belgian mind to evolve new forms of art to answer new needs and solve new problems.

### V

If we try to look back on the development of the spirit of Belgium as it has appeared to us in a bird's-eye view, we shall be struck both by the greatness and strength of the tradition that can be traced back to Rubens, and by the possibilities of the side currents and counter-currents which cross and diversify it. As Belgium has vigorously transformed herself in the past, we may trust her to face the contingencies of the future with boldness and success. She possesses all the elements of vitality: she has been neither emasculated by prosperity nor broken by trial; and the sense of brotherhood and power of co-operation that have held her sons together in the dangers of former days cannot fail her in the coming time. Her latest disaster, a repetition of similar events in her history, is tightening the links of affection between her citizens. For the first time they find themselves united under the guidance of a popular dynasty, whose founder was called to the throne by free election, and whose present head is being consecrated by the

baptism of fire. For the first time also their long devotion to liberty has earned them the gratitude and respect of neighbouring states, and created new and lasting bonds of confidence and love that will strengthen the European sisterhood of nations.



## V

# THE SPIRIT OF THE SERB

BY R. W. SETON-WATSON, D.LITT.

THERE is a Serbian proverb which says, "Victory is not won by shining arms, but by brave hearts"; and no better motto can be found for an essay dealing with Serbia and the spirit of the Serbs. For so far as this war is concerned, the proverb is thoroughly typical of the bravery and stubborn self-reliance with which they have held their own for the past seven months. When war first broke out, those of us who were interested in Serbia and the Balkans, felt it almost necessary to apologise for the importance of the south-eastern front and Serbia's share in the war. At first we were naturally enough engrossed with the western theatre of war, where our own gallant troops are fighting; and many of us were apt to forget that besides Belgium, which has suffered so terribly—*for us*—there is another

## 90 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

small country at our side, the Belgium of the East, Serbia, who has been fighting all alone against terrible odds, and who, alone of all our continental allies (be it said without reproach !), is in the proud position of having expelled every enemy from her native soil. Cynics will tell us that nothing succeeds like success : and it is certainly true that Serbia's victories have aroused an interest which her misfortunes never aroused. But perhaps it is fairer to say that the fog is lifting, and that we are beginning to see more clearly the general proportions of the war. To-day it is being more and more widely admitted that Serbia has triumphantly vindicated her position in the ranks of the allies, and has rendered signal services to the common cause, such as entitle her to every consideration at the settlement which ends the war.

Without going into the details of the campaign, I think it is worth while to summarise briefly what Serbia has actually accomplished. It will be remembered that when Austria-Hungary declared war upon Serbia and thus set a match to the European powder-magazine, she arrogantly announced that her action was to be a "punitive expedition." Since then she has made the bitter discovery that two can play at that game. There has been plenty

of punishing, but it has not been by Austria-Hungary on Serbia, but by gallant little Serbia on her unwieldy Northern neighbour. It is hardly necessary to point out that part of the calculations of the Central Powers was a "walk-over" down the valley of the Morava, the strategic backbone of the Serbian kingdom, through which alone Austria-Hungary can gain access to that goal of all her Balkan dreams, the great Ægean port of Salonica. But instead of swiftly overrunning Serbia, the Austrian armies were held at bay for well over a fortnight, along the rivers Save and Danube, which form the northern boundary of the little kingdom; and then when they at last advanced in force on the north-west, from Bosnia and Slavonia, they were driven back, after a fiercely contested nine days' battle at and around Jadar, into their own territory (August 16-25).

A second Austrian offensive was repulsed towards the middle of September at what is known for convenience' sake as the Battle of the Drina. A month later came the third and biggest wave. Large reinforcements were hurried up, and six weeks of desultory fighting ensued, the Serbs being gradually compelled to evacuate the north-western districts and Belgrade and to withdraw towards defensive positions in the centre of the country. Even then,

## 92 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

it should be remembered, the Serbs had only fallen back to a line where many competent critics had expected to see them within the first fortnight of the war. The prime cause of this retreat was that Serbia's ammunition—ordered and even paid for in France some months before the war, but never delivered—was rapidly running short. One officer told me that in his particular section of the trenches a thousand Austrian shells were replied to by three Serbian; and this incident is typical of a situation which had a fatal effect upon the *morale* of officers and men alike. It was this critical moment which was selected by Bulgarian komitadjis, with the connivance of Sofia and probably at the instigation of Vienna, to blow up one of the main railway bridges on the Vardar valley, and thus to block for eight precious days the transit of war material along the only available railway line from Salonica, Serbia's only available port.

For a short time it seemed as though the Austrians were about to carry all before them, and more than one Serbian statesman was hinting openly of impending disaster. And then at last the long delayed ammunition began to arrive. Early in December there was a sudden and desperate rally, which took the invaders completely by surprise. Rudnik has given its



name to the great battle which covered a front of fifty miles. First the Austrian right was driven back in utter confusion on Valjevo and then pursued across the Drina and the Save, leaving thousands of prisoners and a rich booty in the hands of the Serbs ; then the centre was forced to retire, and finally the defeat of the left wing rendered the hasty evacuation of Belgrade inevitable. By the middle of December not a single armed Austrian remained on Serbian soil.

This magnificent rally of the Serbian arms, which will unquestionably go down to history as one of the finest achievements of the great war, was above all due to the timely arrival of those munitions of war without which no soldiery in the world can hope for victory. But an important contributory cause—of the kind calculated to influence so impressionable a race as the Serb—was the gallant behaviour of the old King, who, though infirm and broken with rheumatic gout, hurried to the front at the most critical moment and gave a stirring address to his troops. Classical authors were fond of composing elaborate summaries of what various generals and statesmen ought to have said, but most probably did not say, on similar occasions ; but in this case I can vouch for the general sense, though not for the

actual words. "Heroes," he said (for in the Serbian language the usual form of address is not "soldiers," but "heroes"—the fine old mediæval "junaci")—"Heroes, you have taken two oaths, one to me, your King, and one to your country. From the first I release you, for the situation is far too grave to justify me, an old man on the edge of the grave, in holding you to it. From the oath to your country no man can release you. But I promise you, that if you decide to return to your homes, and if fortune favours our cause, you shall not be made to suffer. But whether you go or stay, I and my sons remain here." Needless to say, the effect of such a speech was electrical, and not a man left his post.

Some readers may find a suspicious resemblance to Henry v.'s famous speech before Agincourt; and it is certain that King Peter, who as a young man translated John Stuart Mill's essay on Liberty into Serb, knows his Shakespeare also. But I cannot help wondering whether the splendid response which met his words did not recall to his mind another incident but little known to Western readers—the cry of the Serb nobles to the greatest of the Serbian Tsars, Stephen Dusan—"Wherever thou ledest us, most glorious Tsar, we will follow thee." There is the true spirit of the Serb.

In this connection I cannot help quoting another thoroughly characteristic incident which also occurred at the same low ebb of Serbia's fortunes. General Stepanović, one of Serbia's ablest generals, had been made a Voivode or Marshal for his services at an earlier stage of the campaign. When the retreat became general and spirits fell, he called up one of his favourite regiments and addressed them as follows: "Heroes, it is to your valour and achievements that I owe my appointment as a Voivode. You are no longer worthy of your past, and unless you mend your ways, I shall tear off these epaulettes and fling them at your feet!" That, too, is typical of the Serbian spirit.

What then does Serbia's achievement mean to the common cause? To begin with, the Serbs were the first to deal a blow at the prestige of Austria-Hungary, and conjointly with Belgium at the other end of Europe they supplied eloquent proof of what national feeling can do against heavy odds. Secondly, they kept fully occupied large military forces which might otherwise have been diverted to the Western or to the Galician fronts. According to a Hungarian official estimate—an estimate which, coming from the enemy, is hardly likely to err on the side of over-statement—the losses incurred by Austria-Hungary against Serbia

## 96 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

alone up to 1st November were no fewer than 148,000 (38,438 killed, 92,955 wounded, and 17,208 prisoners).<sup>1</sup> During the fighting last November and December at least 100,000 more must have been placed *hors de combat*; and it is a notorious fact that the beaten Austrian army was so completely demoralised as to be useless for any further offensive movement.<sup>2</sup> Thus we shall not be guilty of exaggeration if we assume that Serbia has from first to last accounted for half a million of the enemy, including those killed, wounded, captured and broken in *morale*.

Above all, Serbia has formed a rampart between the Central Powers and Turkey, a fatal flaw in the design which extended from Berlin to Bagdad, from Vienna and Budapest to Salonica. The operations at the Dardanelles are revealing to the man in the street what ought even before to have been fairly obvious—the true value and significance of Serbia to the Allied cause. Her destruction would enable the Germans to relieve the beleaguered Turks, to replenish her dwindling stores of ammunition

<sup>1</sup> See *Morning Post*, 18th November 1914.

<sup>2</sup> In the final rout of the Austrians the Serbs took 37,000 prisoners, exclusive of several thousand wounded soldiers whom the enemy had to abandon in their haste. There were already 17,000 prisoners. This gives a total of 54,000 unwounded prisoners, or close on 60,000 all told.

and even to stiffen their army with fresh troops ; it would drive Bulgaria willy nilly into the arms of the Dual Alliance ; it would finally isolate Russia and Rumania from Western Europe, and by cutting off the latter's war supplies, would virtually force her to abandon her dreams of conquest ; and incidentally it would place the Central Powers in possession of one of the most valuable copper mines in Europe. Thus our own vital interests are clearly involved in the maintenance of Serbia as a fighting force. She has borne the burden and heat of the day, she has rendered signal service to the Allied cause, and her valour has finally dispersed the calumnies with which her enemies so long assailed her reputation.

At this stage something must be said of the Serbian Army. It does not merely typify, it is identical with, the Serbian nation ; for nation and army are one in a sense which we in our island fastness still only dimly comprehend. The shadow of a hideous crime perpetrated twelve years ago had obscured its reputation, and foreign opinion had completely overlooked the rapid growth of a new spirit within its ranks, until its splendid victories in the first Balkan War against the Turks and the no less splendid victories of their melancholy sequel, the war against Bulgaria, supplied a highly practical

## 98 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

and unmistakable proof. To a Scotsman there comes a natural temptation to recognise among the modern Serbs some of those rugged fighting qualities which his ancestors developed under the inspiring leadership of Wallace and of Bruce. Two years ago I had an opportunity of observing the Serbian Army at close quarters ; for I spent five weeks travelling in Serbian Macedonia on the eve of the second Balkan War, made the acquaintance of a great many officers of all ranks, was repeatedly entertained at mess, and visited many of their camps and garrison towns. No one who has had such an experience can fail to be struck by the almost ideal relations which exist between officers and men, the charming blend of discipline and comradeship. Some people may think this natural enough in an army where a captain may often have his brothers and cousins in his own company ; but there are other peasant armies where it is not to be found. But certainly the Serbian Army is permeated with the democratic spirit, in the best sense of the word. Just as it is customary to address the troops as a whole as “ heroes,” so the officers summon their men to the fight, not as “ men,” but as “ brothers.” After the day’s work was over, it was pleasant to see officers and men together dancing the Kolo, the famous national dance of the Serb, and yet to realise that this—

according to Prussian standards—monstrous familiarity did not for a moment impair the strict discipline which is indispensable to every army. Those who judge armies by the goose-step or by parade uniforms, will not have much praise for the Serbian Army (though even here it is worth pointing out that its field-kit is one of the smartest in Europe); but as a fighting machine, seasoned by the rough and tumble experiences of two recent campaigns, it cannot be valued too highly, within the limits prescribed by a country of four million inhabitants.

Here are a few anecdotes to illustrate these democratic relations and the primitive outlook which underlies them.

In the first Balkan War a Serbian regiment found itself threatened by superior forces of the enemy and was forced to retire. Of the men serving the machine-guns, all but one were killed or wounded; but this man, instead of withdrawing with his comrades, continued to work his gun with fiendish energy and did great execution among the advancing Turks. At last the latter, not realising that he stood alone and fearing a trap, retired in their turn, and thus on that section of the front the situation had been saved by the courage of a single man. His exploit was duly reported to the general, who sent for him next day. The gunner

## 100 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

came, saluted and stood before him. The general greeted him with a ferocious scowl and said, "You're a terrible fellow. What's this I hear of you? They tell me it was a regular massacre. How many men did you kill?" The gunner, much perturbed at such a reception, stammered out his belief that certainly well over a hundred men must have fallen victims to his machine-gun. "Well," said the general, still frowning, "there's nothing for it but to make you a corporal." "Oh, general," exclaimed the man, who had expected some kind of punishment. "And now, Corporal —, I make you a sergeant." "Oh, general," gasped the man, speechless with astonishment. "And now, Sergeant —," the general went on, "I make you a lieutenant." The new officer burst out crying. "And now," cried the general, "*now embrace me!*"

Surely there is something Napoleonic about such a tale as this. It is redolent of the days of Ney and Murat and Bernadotte. But my other anecdotes take us many centuries further back. I remember being told by a charming Serbian major what difficulties he had experienced during the Balkan War in holding his men back under artillery fire. They were always for rushing on at any risk. Once when he remonstrated seriously with them for their



folly, some of them explained that they did not mean to disobey orders, they merely wanted to "get inside the curve" (of the shells!).

One of the chief concerns of the Serbian soldiers is to avoid being wounded in the head; and some of them, in the early days of that war, finding from practical experience that the effect of shrapnel fire was very greatly reduced by earthworks, tried to apply the same principle to themselves, by plastering their caps with a good layer of mud!

At the battle of Bakurna Gumna the Serbian infantry had to advance across an open plain, without a particle of cover, against entrenched Turkish positions. On one of the hills above the battlefield is perched the ruined castle of Marko Kraljević, Mark the King's Son, the most famous hero of Serbian legend, whose name still lives in the popular poetry of the race. The Turkish positions were stormed, and next day some officers visited their wounded men in the field hospitals and praised them for their gallantry. The answer came, "With Marko Kraljević to help us, it was easy enough"; and it transpired that more than one soldier had seen Marko on his famous grey charger, splashing through the mud before them and waving them on to victory. No argument

## 102 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

could shake their fond belief in a delusion as old as the famous day of Lake Regillus.

Let me try to sum up, very sketchily and imperfectly, the Serb character. The Serb is gay, genial, open, hospitable, very friendly to strangers, talkative, not to say garrulous, but after interminable and quite needless talk about what is to be done, ready to do it with a rush! He is easily roused to enthusiasm, but changeable and prone to sudden fits of depression. His mercurial tendency to spring from the seventh Heaven to the deepest Hell and back again—a tendency very noticeable during the present war—has made superficial observers call him “the Frenchman of the Balkans.” Certainly no greater contrast could be imagined than that between him and his Bulgarian neighbour, so persevering and so obstinate, so reserved and suspicious, far less imaginative and slower to grasp a situation, but never renouncing an idea which has once entered his head. It is this fundamental difference of psychology which is the real inner cause of that regrettable quarrel between the two Balkan neighbours.

The Serb peasant is a perfect gentleman, in the truest sense of that much abused word. Nothing is more remarkable than the testimony of the nurses and doctors who have gone out to

Serbia knowing nothing of the country or its ways. Not all are unqualified in their praise of the educated class, but none can speak too highly of the peasant. He never complains, and is always full of gratitude and tact towards those who nurse him. The head doctor of a large neutral hospital said to me as he showed me round the wards, which were filled with a medley of Serbs and Austrian prisoners of every race in the Hapsburg Monarchy: "If you see a man complaining, you may be sure he is not a Serb!"

Though chock-full of sentiment, the Serb, like most peasants, is a shrewd man of business—more especially the Serb of Croatia and Southern Hungary, who has the commercial instinct to a marked degree and has in recent years steadily outclassed his Croat, Magyar, and even German neighbours in trade and local organisation. His kinsman the Croat, on the other hand, is a sheer romanticist and individualist. Politically the most quarrelsome of all the Slavs—and that is saying a good deal—he suffers from the artistic temperament, though under happier circumstances the defects of his qualities will soon be thrown into the shade by his very sterling merits. In Bosnia, Turkish influence has introduced among Serb and Croat alike something of the fatalist element; while

## 104 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

in Dalmatia the Southern Slav nature is more complex than ever owing to the admixture of Italian influence. The Dalmatian Croats will play a great part in the new Southern Slav state. In them the subtleness and aloofness of the Italian mind have been grafted upon a nature that is at once childish and reckless, full of the poetry of the sea and the initiative which the mariner is bound to learn. To Italy again may perhaps be traced the caustic wit which vents itself in many a modern pasquinade, and which before the war could be studied in *Duje Balavac*, a comic paper published in Spalato by a small group of Croat artists and caricaturists. Here again two anecdotes will suffice.

Last winter when the Austrian Landsturm (the last line of defence) was called to the colours and the usual medical tests were dispensed with, a notice was found one morning appended to some of the tombs in the ancient cemetery of Spalato, with the words, "Arise, ye dead! Ye too are required to fight for the Emperor Francis Joseph!" The police, with that lack of humour which has always characterised the Austrian police and has done so much to alienate the witty Dalmatians from the bureaucrats who rule them, promptly offered a reward of £80 for information regarding the author of this joke. Next day, underneath the police

proclamation a new placard was discovered. "Before communicating the name of the offending party, we beg to inquire whether the reward will be paid in gold, or in the new Austrian notes!"

During the first three weeks of the first Balkan War boundless enthusiasm was displayed by the Croats and Serbs of Dalmatia for their victorious Balkan kinsmen, and the national anthems of the Allies were continually sung by crowds in the streets, among others, the Montenegrin hymn, composed by the Serb poet-king Nicholas.<sup>1</sup> Its opening words, "Onamo, 'namo" (literally, "thither, thither"), express the writer's belief in the day when his men shall go to deliver the ancient Serb capital of Prizren "out there beyond the mountains." When all of a sudden the Dalmatian police strictly forbade the singing of this hymn, the students invented a new version, which began, "Ovamo, 'vamo" (hither, hither)—thus conveying in a skilfully veiled form their wish that Montenegrin troops might find their way, not to Prizren, but to Dalmatia!

What has been said of the democratic spirit

<sup>1</sup> A very charming translation was published by Sir Arthur Evans in his *Illyrian Letters*, written when, as a young man, he took part in the Bosnian rising against Turkish misrule.

in the Serbian Army, applies to the nation as a whole. There is no aristocracy: for the Turks took care to exterminate it. There is only a very small middle class: for there are hardly any industries in the modern sense. Serbia is essentially a peasant state, and her statesmen, her diplomats and her writers are all alike of recent peasant origin. Even the grandfather of the present king and the great-grandfather of the late king, the founders of the two dynasties whose rivalry brought such injury upon Serbia, were merely well-to-do peasants distinguished from their neighbours by superior energy and initiative. To-day the land is well distributed, almost every peasant owning a few acres of his own. On the one hand there are no large proprietors as in Rumania, on the other, poverty and destitution were virtually unknown until the horrors of this war came upon the little kingdom.

It is not my present purpose to indulge in an historical disquisition. Serbia, as is well known, is a Slavonic state; indeed, so far as purity of race is concerned, she probably holds the primacy among all Slav races. She looks to Russia as to the big Slavonic brother and to the eldest son of Orthodoxy; but despite the traditional ties of sympathy between

Belgrade and Petrograd the actual links which bind the little peasant community with the Northern autocracy are curiously slender, in fact far more slender than those which subsist between Belgrade and Paris, or indeed even Vienna and Budapest.

The whole of Serbian history is dominated by one overpowering fact—the secular struggle against the Turks. Some people still talk glibly of Balkan savagery; perhaps I should say “talked,” for with the fate of Belgium and Northern France before our eyes, less is heard to-day of such cheap criticism. What I feel bound to insist upon is this. We have no right ever to forget that the backwardness of the Balkans is due to that Turkish hoof under which, according to the proverb, the grass never grows, and that the Serb, the Bulgarian and the Rumanian, each in his own way and in his own degree, suffered centuries of national extinction or decay, in order that Western Europe might pursue undisturbed its task of civilisation.

The battle of Kosovo, the great battle which sealed the fate of Serbian independence (28th June 1389), has sometimes been called the Flodden of the Balkans, but it has always filled a far larger place in the imagination of the Serb than Flodden could ever fill in that of the Scot.

## 108 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

The fatal "field of the blackbirds" has gathered round it a rich garland of heroic ballad poetry and romantic legend, which was first revealed to Western Europe by the German poet Herder in his charming collection of "Voices of the Nations" (*Stimmen der Völker*). A little later Goethe, avowedly adopting the version of an Italian priest and traveller, produced a very perfect translation of one of the masterpieces of Serbo-Croat ballad poetry—"The Wife of Hassan Aga,"—and it was this which did much to stimulate interest in the admirable collections published during the twenties and thirties of last century by the great Serb philologist Vuk Karadžić. A rich assortment of popular tales, proverbs and lyrical poetry was gathered orally by Vuk from the various Serbo-Croat provinces, but above all from Herzegovina, which in matters of linguistic purity and style is admitted to be the Tuscany of the Southern Slavs. In England I only know of three attempts at translation—those of that gallant literary pioneer Sir John Bowring, of the poet "Owen Meredith" (Lord Lytton), and of the late Madame Mijatović—all three long ago out of print.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A number of prose versions have recently been published by Mr. V. M. Petrović in an attractive illustrated volume entitled, *Hero Tales and Legends of the Serbians*.



The proverbs of a nation are often said to be a key to its character. Here then are a few :

“ The face of a wife shows what her husband is; the shirt of a husband shows what his wife is.”

“ Though a cow may be black, her milk is white.”

“ A woman has long hair, but short brains.”

“ Ill-gotten wealth never reaches the third generation.”

“ God sometimes shuts one door, in order to open a hundred others.”

“ Where the devil cannot cause mischief, he sends an old woman, and she does it.”

“ A cheerful heart spins the flax.”

“ Better let the village perish than its ancient customs.”

Serb and Croat popular lyric poetry—Serb and Croat, it must be remembered, are two names for one and the same language, the sole difference being that the former is written in a reformed Cyrillic alphabet, the latter in Latin characters—is marked by great sweetness and originality, but it is the heroic ballads which have won for Serbia so unique a place in literature, beside those of the Anglo-Scottish Border. It is worth insisting on the characteristic distinction drawn by the language between “feminine” (*ženske*) or lyrical, and “heroic” (*junacke*) or epic, poetry. The whole cycle of Kosovo ballads, and that other cycle which deals

## 110 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

with the endless adventures of Marko Kraljević and his mythical horse Šarac, are to-day still a living reality to every peasant in Serbia, Bosnia, Dalmatia and Croatia, and fill a place in their imagination such as it is difficult for us to realise.

A single poem can never supply the key to whole literature, but I cannot refrain from quoting one which may suggest to others, as it did to myself from the very first, analogies to the grim ballad of "The Twa Corbies" and to that wonderful passage of the Finnish *Kalevala*, where the mother of Lennankainen mourns her dead son. The metre employed is almost invariably decasyllabic and unrhymed, with a cæsura in the middle of the line, on either side of which greater varieties of speed and scansion are attainable than in the facile but monotonous rhythms of Scott or Byron. Such a poem really defies translation, and the most I can aim at is to give some faint idea of the atmosphere of the original.<sup>1</sup>

"Dear God,        how great a marvel!  
When the army camped        on the field of Kosovo,  
And in that army        nine Jugović brothers,  
And the tenth,        the old Jug Bogdan.

The mother of the Jugović        prays to God,  
That He may give her        the eyes of a falcon

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<sup>1</sup> The gap in the centre of each line represents the cæsura.

And the white wings of a swan,  
That she may fly to the Plain of Kosovo  
And may see the nine Jugović brothers  
And the tenth, the old Jug Bogdan.

As she prayed, her prayer was granted.  
God gave her the eyes of a falcon  
And the white wings of a swan.  
Then she flies to the Plain of Kosovo.  
Dead she found the nine Jugović brothers  
And the tenth, the old Jug Bogdan.  
And above them, nine spears of battle ;  
Perched on the spears, falcons nine ;  
Around the spears, nine good steeds ;  
And beside them, nine grim lions.  
Then did they whinny, the nine good steeds ;  
Then did they roar, the nine grim lions ;  
Then did they scream, the nine falcons.  
Ev'n then the mother was hard of heart,  
And from her heart no tear did rise.

But she takes the nine good steeds,  
And she takes the nine grim lions,  
And she takes the nine falcons.  
Back she turns to her castle white.

From afar her sons' wives saw her :  
A little nearer they came to meet her.  
There was clamour of nine widows :  
There was weeping of nine orphans :  
There was neighing of nine good steeds ;  
There was roaring of nine grim lions :  
There was screaming of nine falcons.  
E'en then the mother was hard of heart,  
And from her heart no tear did rise.

When night was come, and midnight was there,  
Then the grey horse of Damian groaned.

## 112 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

And Damian's mother      asked his wife :  
 ' Daughter of mine      and wife of Damian,  
 What sets the horse      of Damian groaning ?  
 Can it be hunger      for pure white corn ?  
 Can it be thirst      for water of Zvečan ? '  
 Then answered      the wife of Damian :  
 ' It is not hunger      for pure white corn :  
 It is not thirst      for water of Zvečan.  
 It is, that      Damian had taught him,  
 Till midnight,      to feast on hay,  
 And after midnight,      to take the road.  
 Now 'tis his master,      he is mourning  
 For he will never      bear him more.'  
 E'en then the mother      was hard of heart,  
 And from her heart      no tear did rise.

When morning came      and break of dawn,  
 There came flying      two coal black ravens.  
 Bloody were their wings      up to the shoulders.  
 Round their beaks      there clung white foam.  
 And they carried      the hand of a hero,  
 And on the hand      a wedding ring of gold.  
 They threw it into      the mother's lap.

The mother of the Jugović      took the hand,  
 She turned it round,      she fondled it,  
 And then she called      the wife of Damian.  
 ' Daughter of mine      and wife of Damian,  
 Couldst thou tell      whose hand is this ? '  
 Then answered      the wife of Damian :  
 ' Mother of mine,      O mother of Damian,  
 This is the hand      of our own Damian.  
 For I do know      the ring, my mother ;  
 At the betrothal      I did have it.'

The mother took      the hand of Damian,  
 She turned it round,      she fondled it.  
 Then to the hand      she softly spake :  
 ' O my hand,      my fresh green apple,

Where didst thou grow,        where wert thou plucked ?  
'Twas on my bosom        thou didst grow ;  
The plucking,        'twas on Kosovo's plain.'  
Speaking, she breathed        her soul away."

The Serbs and Croats may fairly claim a special niche in the fane of literature for their ballad poetry. They also possess very charming songs ; but musically these cannot for a moment compare with the songs of certain other Slav races, especially the Slovaks, Czechs and Ruthenes (Ukrainians). This is proved by the primitive nature of their national instruments—the gusla, or one-stringed fiddle, which supplies an ideal atmosphere for recitative verse, but cannot rank high in the musical world, and the bagpipes, which resemble, not the great war pipe of Scotland, but the more squeaky instrument of the Piedmontese Alps.

The whole heroic cycle of Kosovo has in the last few years found its apotheosis in the sculpture of Ivan Mestrović, a young Dalmatian Croat, who is giving expression to the dream of Serbo-Croat Unity in stone. His remarkable designs for a Southern Slav Valhalla carried Rome by storm at the Exhibition of 1910, and will, it is to be hoped, at an early date reveal to London also the intensity of the Southern Slav ideal.

The reader may wonder why no reference has

been made to the Church or to religious life. The answer, unfortunately, is that there is no religious life in the Balkans, in the Western sense of the word, and equally so in the Russian sense. The Balkan Churches are mere formalist machines which exist for political propaganda. Let us leave it at that.

So far I have spoken mainly of the Serbs. But it is impossible to emphasise too strongly the fact that Serbia is only a fragment of a far bigger question, the Southern Slav Question, which can only be treated and understood as a whole, and which this war has got to solve as a whole, unless we are to have fresh wars in Europe. Serbia is not merely fighting for her independence and existence, but also for the liberation of her kinsmen, the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes of Austria-Hungary, and for the realisation of National Unity. Hence the real question at issue is the future of eleven millions of people, inhabiting the whole eastern side of the Adriatic, from sixty miles north of Trieste as far as the Albanian mountains. Of these, only four millions live in the two independent Serb kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro (and it is to be remembered that the Montenegrins, who lie outside our present scope, are pure Serbs, equally inspired by the idea of Unity, and will inevitably and rightly coalesce with their

more advanced kinsmen after this war). The remaining seven millions inhabit Austria and Hungary, being cut up into a number of different provinces (Dalmatia, Bosnia - Herzegovina, Croatia-Slavonia, Istria, Carniola) with varying forms of administration. It lies outside my present purpose to attempt any general survey of the growth of nationalism among the Southern Slavs. It is sufficient to point out the very conflicting attitude of the two governments of the Dual Monarchy towards the problem—an attitude varying from neglect and indifference on the part of Austria to the grossest possible misgovernment and corruption on the part of Hungary. The Austro - Hungarian Foreign Office unhappily took its cue from the latter rather than from the former; and the result was the European scandals connected with the Agram High Treason Trial, the Friedjung Trial and the anti-Serb forgeries perpetrated by Austro - Hungarian diplomats. The national movement which these scandals did so much to accentuate, culminated in April 1912, when the Hungarian Government, in defiance of all law, simply abolished the Croatian Constitution, established a restrictive censorship which eclipsed even that of Russia at its most repressive period, and after a short interval illegally annulled the charter of the Serb Ortho-

dox Church in Croatia-Slavonia. Thus it was the reactionary policy of the Magyar oligarchy which rendered ineffective, hampered at every turn, the perfectly genuine desire of certain circles in Vienna to solve the Southern Slav Question in a "Hapsburg" sense, and which yearly envenomed still further the relations of Austria-Hungary with the independent Serb states.

The monstrous *régime* of the dictator Cuvaj in Croatia was still at its height when the Balkan War broke out, and the contrast between Magyar misrule at home and the glorious victories of their free kinsmen across the Serbian frontier heightened the effect. The whole Southern Slav provinces of Austria-Hungary were carried off their feet by a wave of indescribable enthusiasm for Serbia and Montenegro. It is no exaggeration to assert that the cause of Southern Slav Unity "moved on" a whole generation in a few months. I shall never forget how, after an absence of barely a year, I returned to Dalmatia during the Scutari crisis (April 1913) and was laughingly greeted by one of the leading Croat poets as Rip van Winkle. And he was right. The whole outlook and spirit of the race had changed since my last visit, and my best friends were scarcely recognisable. As one of them said to me, "We have regained our belief in



the future of our race." What is most remarkable of all, the old dividing line of religion between Orthodox Serb and Catholic Croat has been well-nigh effaced : it is only here and there that the last lingering traces of religious fanaticism can be found. In 1909 ultra-Clerical Croat fanatics organised a gang of young roughs to molest their progressive rivals on the streets of Agram : four years later some of these very men were fighting as volunteers in the Serbian Army. When the news of the battle of Kumanovo reached Austria, a Catholic Croat bishop recited the *Nunc dimittis*, thus proving that the spirit of the patriot-bishop Strossmayer is reviving among the Croat episcopate. And I may quote my own last meeting with Southern Slavs on Austrian soil, barely a fortnight before the fatal crime of Sarajevo. My three friends were a Slovene Catholic priest, an Orthodox Serb from Bosnia, and a Croat Catholic student from Agram ; all three were equally emphatic in their assertion that the old distinctions between Croat, Serb and Slovene, between Catholic, Orthodox and Moslem, were part of an evil past, and that in future all would be Southern Slavs. This incident is in no way remarkable, but it is thoroughly typical.

As a prominent Croat Clerical deputy publicly declared during the Balkan War, " In the Balkan

## 118 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

sun we see the dawn of our day." Two years ago all the Southern Slavs of Austria-Hungary protested in despair against the bare idea of an Austro-Serbian war, as being to them a civil war. And it must be remembered that civil war has been going on before our eyes. For the idea of unity thousands of gallant Serbian soldiers have been dying; and on the same field thousands of others of their own race have died reluctantly, compelled by a brutal and perverse system to fight against their own blood brothers. And many others have been shot like dogs in ruined villages, because they dared to sympathise with their kinsmen across a frontier which was artificially created against the wishes of themselves and their ancestors.

It is often asked: What will Serbia get out of this war? And there usually comes the superficial answer: Oh, no doubt Bosnia and a port on the Adriatic. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that if Serbia gets Bosnia, that will settle nothing. Unless she can unite the race, it is better that she and Montenegro too should be overwhelmed and annexed to a reconstructed Austrian Empire. Deep down in the hearts of most thinking Serbs there lives a perception of this truth. As their own proverb says, It is better not to begin, than not to finish.

In this country the movement for Greek and

Italian liberty and independence aroused great enthusiasm in their day. The movement for Southern Slav liberty and unity is far less known, but ought to arouse the same enthusiasm. Our statesmen since the war began have repeatedly declared that we are fighting for the principle of Nationality, and there is no place in Europe where the issue is clearer than among the Southern Slavs and in Serbia, "the Belgium of the East." British public opinion need have no hesitation in sympathising with Serbia and her Serbo-Croat and Slovene kinsmen, and in welcoming the new state, which is celebrating its baptism of fire, as a worthy member of the new and freer Europe that is yet to be.



## VI

### THE SPIRIT OF JAPAN

BY PROFESSOR J. H. LONGFORD

JAPAN is the Island Empire of the Eastern as the United Kingdom is of the Western seas. It is common knowledge that the peoples of the two countries are radically different, and this appears curiously in many of the incidents of daily life. When the Japanese are building a house, they construct the roof first and the walls afterwards. When it is finished the best rooms are in the rear, and the kitchen, scullery, and back room in the front. They print and read a book from right to left and put the notes at the top of the page. At a hotel, the guest does not tip the servants on leaving, but the landlord on arriving. A young lawyer tries to get a judicial post early in his career in order to gain experience and reputation which will subsequently enable him to acquire a lucrative practice at the Bar. A wedding feast takes

## 122 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

place at the house of the bridegroom's parents and not at that of the bride's. It is held at night and precedes the legal celebration. The bride leaves her home dressed in pure white, not as an emblem of brightness and joy but of mourning, to show that she is henceforth dead to her own parents. The mother-in-law is not an apocryphal terror to the young husband, but a very real and always present terror to the young wife. European ladies say that their Japanese sisters never thread the needle, but needle the thread. The contrary spirit followed them when they made their first essays in wearing European dress. An English dress-maker in Tokio had the utmost difficulty in fitting them until she found they invariably put on their corsets upside down.

I might extend the catalogue indefinitely, but I shall only mention one other point. We trust to luck. We never prepare beforehand for national crises, believing that when the time comes we shall, with the help of Providence, somehow muddle through successfully as our fathers have always done in the past. The Japanese leave nothing to chance. Their preparations are made and completed in peace, silently, patiently, with unwearying industry, with a foresight that overlooks nothing, so effectively that when war comes not a gaiter-

button is wanting. The Kultur of a great Empire and the blandishments of its Emperor so obsessed a large and loudly-voiced section among us that they honestly thought, and endeavoured to convince their more prudent fellow-countrymen, that our dear cousins never, never would assail us, and we failed to make the military preparations we should have done. The Japanese had their bitter experience of German honour and German merey in 1895. They never forgot it; and though the Kaiser was in subsequent years as civil and kind to them as he was to us, they were ready to make him feel their strength when the time came.

What shall one say of the spirit of this people? It claims to have a history extending over two thousand five hundred years, and the authentic portion of it, that which bears successfully the test of modern scientific investigation, exceeds one thousand five hundred years. Throughout this long period, beginning at the time when the Roman conquerors were still in occupation of the main island of our own kingdom, only one solitary attempt has been made by a foreign enemy to invade the Island Empire with the avowed object of bringing its inhabitants under the sway of a sovereign not of their own race and kin. In the year 1281, Kublai Khan, the founder of the Mongol

## 124 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

dynasty in China, whose name as a conqueror was known as far as the frontier of Poland, equipped a mighty expedition of more than 300 great ships and an army of 100,000 men, all seasoned Mongol warriors, whose prowess had been proved in countless battlefields on the Asiatic continent in which they had never known defeat.

The expedition has been compared by modern Japanese historians to that of the Spanish Armada, and very marked similarities exist between the two. Like Philip II., Kublai Khan was the absolute sovereign of a mighty continental Empire. The dominions of both had been harried and plundered by the adventurous sailors of what they considered insignificant islands, and each ruler felt obliged in all honour to vindicate his own dignity by the extermination of a race of insolent pirates and the subjection to his own authority of the islands which gave them birth. Both expeditions had the same fate. In each case the skill, valour and determination of the Islanders were supplemented by the forces of nature, which came to their aid at the most opportune moment. Just as the great Spanish galleons were scattered and shattered by storms on the rock-bound coasts of Scotland and Ireland, so were the huge Chinese junks shattered and sunk by a typhoon,



the most terrible form of storm that sweeps the seas in any part of the world, as they lay anchored in close order on the coast of Kiushiu, while preparing to land their military force.

The ruin was even more overwhelming than that of the Spaniards three hundred years later. Over one-third of the latter, both ships and men, survived to reach their homes. Of all Kublai's great naval and military force, only three persons returned to tell their lord what had befallen them. Nature had been their most successful enemy, and the most effective ally of the Japanese; and just as Elizabeth rendered thanks where they were due, and inscribed on her medals recording the destruction of the great Armada, "*Afflavit Deus et dissipantur*," so the Japanese to this day still call the storm which overwhelmed the Mongol fleet "*The Divine Wind*." But while favoured with divine help, the Japanese sailors, outnumbered, with inferior armament, destitute of the enemy's powerful artillery, catapults capable of hurling huge stones with great force to no inconsiderable distance, had, in their own small light and easily-handled ships, boldly faced the Mongol warriors, harried them upon the high seas, and given them ample forecast of the task that would have faced them had they landed. The whole story of the attempted invasion is natur-

## 126 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

ally told in many Japanese histories. In the Kikon Gwaishi, the *New History of Japan*, completed in 1827, Rai Sanyo, the author, remarks :

“ Our plan was to hold the shore and draw the enemy on : to attack them in swift cutters and to fall on them at close quarters, all of which tactics should serve as a pattern for future ages. We had no firearms ; they had, but our men rushed on them with their swords, so that they had not time to fire. From this I learn that the secret of victory or defeat lies in the spirit of the men and not in their weapons. We, Japanese, have a character in which we naturally excel, and in that we should put our trust.”

The spirit of the men who, trusting in the protection and help of their national gods, for their Emperor's and their country's sake never quailed before the conquering Mongols, survived in their descendants who poured out their blood like water on the fortress-crowned heights of Port Arthur ; and the character which united the nation as one man in the thirteenth century is the same as that which has enabled two generations of Japanese in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in what is but a moment in the whole lifetime of a people, to raise their beloved country from a position of absolute insignificance amongst the nations of the world

to the status of an acknowledged Great Power, commercial and industrial as well as military, which we ourselves are both glad and proud to claim as our ally. To-day Japan is a great constitutional Empire, absolutely united in the most devoted and self-sacrificing loyalty, with naval and military strength that enables it to make its voice heard wherever it chooses to speak ; with great and growing industries ; with a foreign trade that has now attained an annual value of over one hundred and thirty-six millions sterling ; with an annual revenue, equitably levied and honestly administered, of sixty-three millions sterling ; with national credit that causes it to be a welcome borrower in all the money markets of the world ; with important and flourishing colonies ; an empire in which every subject enjoys the fullest constitutional liberty and protection and the benefit of all the products of modern science, and in which all subjects are equal in the sight of the laws.

What was its condition less than fifty years ago when the late Emperor came to the throne? For two hundred and twenty years it had been cut off by its own rulers from all association with the outward world, and knew nothing of the progress which had been made beyond its own borders. It was rent by civil war. The

people were crushed under one of the most oppressive systems of feudalism that the world has ever seen, a system under which the majority were practically serfs, destitute of all consciousness of personal rights or freedom, whose liberty, property, even their lives, were at the arbitrary disposal of their rulers, whose occupations, dress, and residences were rigidly prescribed for them, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for a minority of haughty aristocrats who made the most autocratic use of the despotic power they had held for seven centuries. The arm of the central Government scarcely extended beyond the capital. There was no national revenue, the Imperial money chest was empty, and foreign observers believed the whole country to be bankrupt. There were no navy, no mercantile fleet, no army that owed allegiance to the sovereign. There was no industry more than was sufficient to supply the modest needs of its own people. Foreign trade was as insignificant as the military power. There were laws, founded both on statute and on precedent, but the people were ignorant of their provisions, and their sanctions were of the most Draconian severity. Ignorance of all the products of modern European science, military, medical, engineering, industrial, sanitary, was complete and universal.

Such was Japan in the last days of her dual Government. Her own sons quickly recognised their national inferiority to the Europeans with whom they were then brought in contact, and the dangers that threatened the continued independent existence of their country unless all this inferiority was quickly remedied. With the spirit that actuated their ancestors when their independence was threatened by the great Mongol tyrant they boldly started on the paths of reform, like their ancestors putting their trust in the spirit of their countrymen and in the national character.

The principal features of this spirit are two, loyalty and fidelity: loyalty, absolute and unquestioning, to the sovereign who, himself directly descended from the gods of heaven, rules, as the father of his people, over the land, the first of all on earth to be created and the fairest of all; fidelity to the duty which is incumbent on all to subject every sense of individualism to the interests of the corporate body of the community, in the first degree to the family, then to the clan (in feudal days), and finally and most of all to the nation. Loyalty and patriotism are in Japanese almost synonymous terms. The sovereign and the country are indissolubly associated. The sovereign could not exist without the country.

The country without the sovereign of the divine lineal succession that has been unbroken for ages eternal is a conception impossible to any Japanese mind, even of the most ardent disciple of modern materialism. The qualities which combine to create the national spirit are devotion, self-confidence, determination, courage that knows no fear of physical pain or of death, enterprise, industry, patience, frugality, courtesy, tact, gentleness, good-humour, cleanliness and the ability to find and enjoy all the best happiness that human life can give.

And in most of these qualities women have their share as well as men. Patience, unselfishness, absolute submission, self-sacrifice without limit, gentle winning manners, soft voices, smiling faces, faithfulness, and tenderness are universal characteristics of Japanese women. But history proves that they have always shown, both in war and peace, a high degree not only of passive but of active physical courage, that they have faced and borne torture or death without a quiver, and that they have not hesitated, when honour or duty called, to find death by the sword in their own hands, with a fortitude no less stoical than that of their husbands, fathers, and sons.

The national history, their religion, the natural physical characteristics of their lovely

Islands, have all aided in the development of these qualities, and to each in turn a few words may now be devoted.

Japan, according to the universal belief of its inhabitants, was the first of all lands to be evolved by the creators out of chaos; and being both the first and the fairest of all, it was natural that the Sun Goddess, herself the daughter of the creators, the great deity who presides over the heavens and to whose beneficent radiance all the blessings of earth are due, should send her own grandson from heaven to rule over it. His direct descendant in the fourth generation was Jimmu, the first mortal Emperor of Japan, who ascended the throne in 660 B.C., and from him all the succeeding Emperors, one hundred and twenty-two in number, who have reigned down to the present day, are descended in one direct and unbroken line. For a thousand years after Jimmu's reign, history is founded only on oral tradition and scarcely rises above the standard of pure mythology, though the national heroes of that period and the national exploits are still real personages and facts in the eyes of the Japanese. Then began the age of Old Japan, what I call the first period of its authentic history, simultaneously with the first universal reformation of the national life and polity by the adoption of the Chinese culture and of a

bureaucratic government that were destined to be the basis of its civilisation for twelve centuries. The art of writing was acquired, and thenceforward the national records make the path of the historian as plain and easy as it is in the case of Greece or Rome.

Till then, the Emperors were sovereigns in fact as well as in name, themselves administering their governments. But from the seventh century or earlier they permitted their executive authority to fall into the hands of the Fujiwara, a family of courtiers whose most remote ancestor had descended from Heaven in the train of the Sun Goddess's grandson, and who therefore claimed an origin only less brilliant than that of the Imperial line. The Fujiwara conserved their powers for five centuries during which the court and capital, at first at Nara and afterwards at Kyoto, attained a high degree of intellectual refinement. The most vivid pictures of life in both more than a thousand years ago still survive in the works of contemporaneous writers of the court, male and female. We can see that it was characterised by refined gaiety, by the display of elegant accomplishments in music, dancing and poetry, by the reverent celebration of religious festivals, and by the cultivation of the arts of painting, architecture and sculpture, principally in order that honour



might be rendered to the religion which in that period became the fervent faith of all classes from the Emperor to the peasant. We can also see that human nature did not materially differ from that of the present day. Gallant, silk-clad lovers wooed and won the favours of the dainty and accomplished ladies of the court, in moonlight promenades amidst the groves of pine trees, in excursions on the lakes, in picnics among the cherry orchards as beautiful then as they are to-day, or in gently drifting down the river, blood-red with the falling leaves of the autumn maple.

In the capital and court all was gentleness and peaceful refinement ; but while courtiers were dallying with their ladies, another race of men was growing up in the provinces, stern and rugged warriors engaged in constant warfare with the savage autochthons whom they were slowly but surely driving northwards, and with whom they were maintaining a struggle not unlike that which the earlier settlers in America waged with the Red Indians. These men could look with little patience on the pleasure-loving effeminate courtiers, whose luxurious ease was so different to the perpetual hardships which were the main characteristics of their own lives, and in time their patience became exhausted. The Fujiwara were dispossessed

## 134 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

of their authority, the courtiers remitted to political impotency, and the Emperor, the divine ruler, became a mere figurehead, in whose name, throughout the succeeding seven centuries, the country was governed by a succession of warriors and statesmen whose authority was created and maintained by the sword. Feudalism was established, and became the main buttress of the political fabric. It was more rigid, more dominant, more universal, more regulated than in its most palmy days under our own Norman kings or in the dark days of the freebooting barons of Germany; and it was more enduring, for it continued unbroken, unquestioned, and all-powerful down to our own day.

This is the second stage of authentic Japanese history, and it is the one which has left its most abiding mark on the national spirit and character. It was during this period that the class of samurai arose. Originally military service was incumbent on all Japanese; but as the population grew, some portion of it had to be reserved for industry, and only the physically strongest were called upon to serve. In the feudal era the line of demarcation between people and soldiers became rigid and permanent. The country was parcelled into fiefs, all practically autonomous in their internal affairs,

though owing a nominal fealty to the central authority; and each feudal lord surrounded himself with as many skilled and trained soldiers as his revenue permitted. Fathers trained their sons to the military service of the lord they had themselves followed, and in process of time the soldiers became an exclusive, hereditary, and highly-privileged caste. These were the samurai, who owed the most unquestioning and self-sacrificing loyalty to their lords, the latter in their turn affording to the vassals, whose swords were ever at their command, support for themselves and their families and protection at all times. Just as the cherry excelled all other flowers in its beauty and fragrance, so, said a Japanese writer, the samurai excelled all other men in all the best of human qualities. It was in the samurai that all the highest qualities of the Japanese character found their living exemplification, and though the samurai as such have gone, with all their caste pride, privileges and monopolies, their spirit still survives in their descendants. They have not fallen. On the contrary, the lower classes have, I believe, been raised to their level, and the spirit which till fifty years ago was their exclusive possession now permeates the whole people. I consider therefore that I am justified when speaking of the spirit of Japan

## 136 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

to assume it as that which under the feudal system animated the samurai.

During the first five centuries of feudalism civil war was practically continuous throughout the Empire, waged as mercilessly and relentlessly as during the worst periods of the Middle Ages of Europe. Successive families rose by the sword to the dignity of the shogunate, the chief executive authority, but only held their office so long as they could maintain it by the same means as they had won it. Great lords established themselves in the provinces in moated and wall-encircled castles, where, guarded by their samurai, they ruled their surrounding domains as quasi-sovereigns, and they too both won and held their fiefs by the sword. It was not until the dawn of the seventeenth century, when Iyeyasu Tokugawa rose to power, the greatest and ablest of all the soldiers and statesmen of old Japan, that an abiding peace was at last secured for the sorely torn land and its people. As a general, Iyeyasu relentlessly crushed all who were opposed to him. As a statesman he displayed constructive and administrative genius of so high an order that he is justly entitled to be considered one of the great men of the world. In the end he was able to lay the foundations of internal peace so firmly that it continued unbroken for two

hundred and fifty years, and to secure the continuance for the same period of the *de facto* sovereignty of the land in the hands of his own direct descendants. Never before, since the decadence of the Emperors, had Japan known a *régime* so enduring and so beneficial. It was then that the apotheosis of feudalism was attained and that the spirit and character of the samurai were pre-eminently marked, both in theory and practice.

The shogunate fell at the accession of the late Emperor Meiji in 1867, and its fall was soon followed by the collapse of the great and grand system of feudalism that had been the living soul of the Empire. The newly enthroned Emperor resumed the active grasp of the sceptre that his ancestors had allowed to pass from their hands; the dual system of government, by a *de facto* sovereign at Tokio and a *de jure* sovereign at Kioto, came to an end; the feudal barons were deprived of their fiefs; and the samurai, the proud and haughty knights, were merged in the general population, among whom they were thenceforward to sink or swim, according to their own industry or ability. Many, very many, of them unfortunately sank; but among those who did not are the founders of modern Japan, the statesmen who have successfully carried their country through storm and

stress to its present position, who have been its greatest civil officials, its generals, admirals, diplomatists, lawyers, and scientists. All were samurai, and they served their country in faithful observance of the traditions handed down from their forefathers. This was the second great reformation of Japan, and the beginning of the third period into which I have divided its history, when the Emperor resumed his full authority and Chinese civilisation was displaced by that of Modern Europe.

It is unnecessary to trace the later history even in the briefest way. It has been shown what Japan was when this great reformation took place and what it now is ; and we have only to recall, out of the many incidents in its most recent history, the wars with China and Russia, to feel that Japan has become a mighty State, not less worthy of the title of Great Japan, fearlessly claimed for her by her own sons, than the insular Empire of the West is worthy of the title of Great Britain.

The second factor which has contributed to the foundation of the Japanese character and to the development of the spirit of Japan is that of Religion. While the Japanese are essentially an irreligious people in our acceptance of the term, their ethical system owes its existence chiefly to three religions which have

from time immemorial, in turn and also, paradoxical though it may seem, simultaneously, exercised a profound influence on the nation. These are Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Shintoism, which means literally "the way of the gods," is the archaic religion of Japan, the religion which was accepted by the people during the thousand years preceding the introduction of Buddhism. It was founded on the traditions that described the creation of Japan and the divine origin of the Emperors, and its basis is the worship of ancestors and of nature, especially the worship of the greatest of all ancestors, those of the Imperial line, whose representative on earth is the father of his people, who governs, guides and protects them with a divinely inherited wisdom. The gods of the winds, of the mountains, and the seas, of earthquake, storm, and flood, in fact all the phenomena of nature, are worshipped. From this worship sprang the fervent love of the sacred land, which is the home of the believers. The two, the worship of ancestors and of nature, are the remote sources of the loyalty and patriotism of the people.

Shintoism has no dogmas, no Bible, no code of morality. All its sacred writings are to be found in the two ancient histories which record the creation of the world and of Japan, and in a

## 140 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

few formulæ or texts that have been preserved from antiquity. There is neither Heaven nor Hell to reward or to punish ; but the spirit of the dead lives in the land of darkness, whence it revisits, aids, and protects the dear ones who are left behind on earth. This system deals neither with a future life nor with moral duty. Honesty, love, and simplicity are its virtues. There is no such thing as original sin, and such is the innate excellence of the human heart that no adventitious gospels are required to enable it to reach perfection. Whatever evil enters it from contact with the inferior elements of humanity can be purged by lustration with water just as effectively and easily as the body can be purified by the same means from physical defilement. Cleanliness of conscience and cleanliness of body are alike essential ; and it is to the teachings of Shintoism that the bathing habit, universal in Japan, is primarily to be attributed. And as Shintoism inculcates reverence for departed ancestors, so also does it teach the belief that they in their turn are ever present with their descendants on earth, sharing in all their joys and sorrows, guarding them in all the crises of life. The Japanese soldier goes into battle believing that all the generations of those who have gone before him are marching unseen by his side, watching his conduct, ready



to strike when he does ; and that, if he falls, his spirit will join their ranks in its turn to be present and co-operate with those who come after him.

Is the courage founded on such a faith likely to be less than that of the Mahomedan to whom the material joys of Paradise are assured when he falls for the Faith ? Recent history has shown that it is not, and that the readiness to sacrifice life for the sake of Emperor and country is a national characteristic of the Japanese, not confined, as was supposed throughout the long centuries of feudalism, to one privileged and aristocratic class, but shared by them with the peasant, mechanic and trader, who were, until fifty years ago, serfs among their own people.

Buddhism was introduced to Japan from Korea in the sixth century of the Christian era, and before the lapse of another century, thanks largely to the liberality with which it recognised Shinto deities as Buddhist avatars, it had practically become the faith of the whole people. Throughout the next ten centuries statecraft, science, education, art, literature, thought and society were, if not absolutely controlled, largely modelled by Buddhist influence, and that influence has left its abiding mark on the spirit of the nation.

I need not attempt to enter upon an explana-

## 142 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

tion of the tenets of Buddhism with its many sects. To convey even the most rudimentary ideas of the principles of a religion that has, for far more than two thousand years, been the faith of an immense section of the human race, would require a long exposition. Suffice to say that according to its doctrines, and especially according to those of the Zen sect, which has had the greatest influence of all the many Buddhist sects in moulding the Japanese character, and has always been the creed of soldiers and of statesmen, the end of human existence is or should be to attain deliverance from the bondage of the laws of life and death, of growth and decay, and an entrance into Nirvana, a condition from which all human sensation is absent, in which thought, passion and feeling have no place. The most effective means to reach that end are a faithful performance of rites and ceremonies, the strict observance of the ten ethical virtues, with meditation and asceticism carried to an extent that enables a man to believe himself alone in the world, to become incapable of influence from outward associations, to be impervious alike to pleasure, sorrow, pain and fear. Believers, both men and women, are taught the virtues of a rigid stoicism, that enables any fate in life to be met with calm resignation, any pain no matter how

terrible to be borne without a groan, any sorrow no matter how crushing to be accepted without a tear ; of fortitude that will surmount any danger with courage, coolness and resolution ; of frugality and self-denial that despise all wealth for wealth's sake ; and of purity of mind and body so that both may be free from all earthly corruption, and successors on earth saved from the lower forms of animal existence that would be their lot if the previous lives failed in virtue.

I have called Confucianism a religion, but the term is a misnomer. It is simply the Chinese system of morality, based not on any religious belief, but on the teaching of the sages of China, the greatest of whom was Confucius, who has given his name to the entire system. His memory is still cherished in his native land with hardly less reverence than we regard our Saviour, though he never laid any claim to divine revelation or professed to be other than a man working for the benefit of his fellow-men, "a teacher whose teaching never transgressed the limits of pure secularism." Confucius lived during the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ. More than a thousand years later the introduction of Chinese civilisation into Japan gave an immense impetus to the study of the language and literature of China.

## 144 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

Such knowledge became the necessary accomplishment of a gentleman or a scholar, just as a knowledge of Latin was among ourselves in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ; and the writings of Confucius became the text-books by which the knowledge was acquired. Their study had the natural influence of propagating the ethical principles which they prescribed ; and alongside Buddhism, which they supplemented in what Buddhism was most deficient, they formed a cardinal element in the construction of the whole system of Japanese morality. During the long period of anarchy which prevailed in Japan during the Middle Ages, Confucianism retired into the background. The warriors despised all learning, and the working classes were too wretched, too deeply sunk in the lowest abysses of human misery in the midst of the universal carnage and spoliation created by their betters, to think of it. Only in the monasteries did it preserve a flickering life. But when, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the great warrior and statesman, Iyeyasu, once more gave the unhappy land an enduring peace, learning again raised its bowed head and began to be eagerly cultivated, not only by those whose sole pride had hitherto been the sword, but by the people. Confucius then became the guiding star of

morality, his works the daily text-books in the schools, and his maxims were committed to memory by every schoolboy and cherished and followed throughout life.

Confucianism supplemented Buddhism. Buddhism taught the duty of man as to his own individual conduct. Confucius (when I speak of Confucius I associate with him his greatest followers and expounders) taught it from the point of view of the man as a unit in a community or in the state. The five great human relationships (*go kyo*) are, he said, those of sovereign and subject, between whom there must be humanity (*jin*) on the one side and loyalty (*chiu*) on the other; parents and children, between whom there must be love (*shin*), represented by filial piety on the part of the children and discipline on that of the parents; husband and wife, between whom there must be "distinction" (*betsu*), meaning due observance of the proprieties; master and servant, between whom there must be righteousness (*gi*); old and young, between whom there must be order (*jo*); and friends, between whom there must be faith (*shin*). The five cardinal virtues (*gojo*) which must be observed in all relationships, apart from their particular application to some of those just detailed, are humanity (*jin*), righteousness (*gi*), politeness

(*rei*), wisdom (*chi*), and faith (*shin*). These are the primary essentials for the proper government of any community, and demand the most faithful observance by every individual member of it.

I may add one more to the contradictions between the Japanese and ourselves. I have said they are essentially an irreligious people. And yet, they are so religious that they all follow three entirely distinct religions. A Japanese is baptized in infancy as a Shintoist, lives as a Confucianist, and is buried as a Buddhist.

The last element to which I need allude as contributing to the formation of the Japanese character is their native land. They inhabit the most lovely islands in the world. Now, though I have seen a considerable part of the world in both hemispheres, I have not seen all their islands, and my statement may therefore appear either rash or ignorant or both. But the islands with which I am best acquainted are Japan and Ireland, in which the greater part of my life has been passed. Froude, after he had seen the West Indies, Ceylon, Tasmania and New Zealand, pronounced Ireland, for which politically he entertained the very reverse of love, the most beautiful island in the world. I won't quarrel with him in that verdict which

was honestly given according to his knowledge. But he had not seen Japan. I have, and have wandered, to a great extent on foot, throughout its length and breadth ; and I know its islands, from the extreme north to the extreme south, as I know Kerry and Antrim. As the result I must frankly, however reluctantly, acknowledge that in natural beauty Ireland must take a place behind Japan. Japan has all the beauties of Ireland, lakes not less lovely than Killarney, rivers as picturesque as the Blackwater, sea-beaten cliffs as imposing as those of Clare or Antrim, mountains as rugged as The Reeks, bays as beautiful as those of Dublin or Cork, a climate which, except in the extreme north and on the north-west, is soft and genial, under whose influence nature shows itself in its most alluring aspects. But it has aspects which Ireland has not. Its seas and bays are studded with countless pine-clad islets, which seen from any mountain top might well seem to be jewels dropped from the spears of the creators when they formed the main islands out of chaos ; the seas in day are of an azure blue, and at night are brilliant with phosphorescent glow ; the atmosphere is of crystalline clearness and purity ; and luxuriant as may be the flora of Ireland, it yields to that of Japan in beauty and in variety and in

## 148 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

abundance. The most rugged mountains of Japan become masses of glowing beauty when covered, as they are at the proper season, with flowering azaleas or with golden lilies, and compared with them those of Ireland seem puny and cold.

Every season in the year has its own flower, fairest of all being the cherry, whose lovely pink and white blossoms spread their fragrance over the whole land in the sunny month of April, and everywhere provide forest bowers of fairy-like beauty, beneath which happy family groups gather in crowds to revel in happiness and good temper amidst a constant flow of cheerful gossip and soft, rippling laughter. The cherry flower is an emblem of life to the Japanese. Its only failing is that it is very shortlived. The first rough wind scatters its petals and covers the ground with a pale-pink carpet and soon all is over. And so should life be. Sunny, bright and beautiful when all goes well, but ever ready for sacrifice when it is required. As the cherry is the first among flowers, so is Fuji first among mountains, in its peerless grace and awe-inspiring majesty, the darling subject of poets and painters through countless centuries. It has been also a factor in the formation of the national character. In a Buddhist temple, from which the whole out-



line of the mountain could be seen as it rose in a gentle sweep from a beach of golden sand, an old priest once told me that he had been looking at the mountain for fifty years and had not yet tired of it ; and in saying so, he spoke not as he thought for himself, but for all the millions of his countrymen in the thirteen provinces of the Empire from which Fuji can be seen. The first glance of every one when he comes out of doors in the morning and the last when he retires at night is towards the sacred mountain, the most beautiful gem in the favoured land of the gods.

There are other mountains in Japan whose influence on character is antipodal to that of Fuji—living volcanoes that at long and uncertain intervals burst into violent eruptions which spread death and destruction over wide areas. The greater part of Japan is essentially volcanic, and earthquakes are therefore frequent and sometimes of terrible effect. Eruptions, earthquakes, and tidal waves have had the inevitable influence of the more terrible phenomena of nature in stimulating imagination, and in cultivating a spirit of reverence which made the people find many of the gods of nature in their enormous Shinto pantheon. But nature's bounty far exceeds its terrors, and the physical beauties of their land have contributed

## 150 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

in no small degree to make its inhabitants the happy, gentle, laughter-loving, frugal, courteous, artistic and poetic people they are. They are not a faultless people. Very far from it; but you forget their failings when that lovely country is under your eyes :

“Though to her share some human errors fall,  
Look on her face and you'll forget them all.”

Such, then, are the main factors that have combined to form the Japanese character. Their history has taught them that their sovereign is the vicegerent on earth of the Gods of Heaven, who rules over an unconquered and unconquerable land, the most beautiful of all lands; and combined with their own archaic religion it has taught them loyalty and patriotism. Buddhism has taught them the duty of submission to any fate, to any sacrifice: Confucianism, to subject every sense of individualism to the common good: and Nature, to enjoy all the happiness that life can give. The aggregate result of all was to produce in the samurai an unselfish patriot and a loyal subject whose equal in these qualities the world has rarely, whose superior it has never, seen. A patriot who scorned all thought of material reward, whose sole watchwords were duty and honour, who hesitated at no sacrifices, not even that of honour where duty called, though the

sacrifice in that case had to be expiated by death at his own hands in a most revoltingly painful form of suicide ; a loyal subject who held not only his own life but those of his wife and children at the disposal of his lord.

History affords countless illustrations of the practice of these virtues ; but I shall only quote two, and these, though founded on history, are taken from dramatic literature, from two most popular dramas, the “Chinshingura” and the “Sugawara Daiju Tenarai Kagami,” both the work of Takeda Izumo, a famous dramatist of the first half of the eighteenth century, when feudalism was at the very summit of its glory and the virtues of the samurai had reached their highest pitch. Both dramas faithfully depict the spirit of that period. Both are frequently reproduced on the stage at the present day ; in both it is the ambition of the greatest actors to make their mark ; both invariably draw large crowds. The “Chinshingura,” or “Loyal League,” is the story of forty-seven samurai who sacrificed everything in life and finally their lives to avenge their lord’s death. The story is vividly and faithfully told in Lord Redesdale’s *Tales of Old Japan*, and I will not therefore repeat its details.

The title of the second drama, neither I nor several Japanese gentlemen in London whose

help I have asked can translate idiomatically. Literally it is "The Mirror of Penmanship transmitted from Sugawara," a curious title for a tragedy of gruesome heroism, though it is not entirely incapable of explanation. Sugawara was a statesman of the tenth century whom enemies at court drove to exile and ruin. He was celebrated in his lifetime as an exquisite penman—penmanship in Japan is an art very high above that in the West—so exquisite that children still pray to Tenjin, the title under which he was apotheosised in the Shinto ancestral pantheon, for his help in their efforts to acquire skill in calligraphy. The drama relates all the incidents of his exile, but I will mention only one scene, "The Terakoya" or village school.

The scene is that of an ordinary village school-house. Sugawara has fled and is in hiding, but has left his only son Shusai, a boy of twelve, in the safe keeping of one of his samurai, Genzo, who is also now disguised as the master of the village school. There the young high-born Shusai is among the children of the peasants, working and playing with them, suspected by none though his birth is plainly stamped in every line of his aristocratic features. His presence is discovered by his father's enemies, and Genzo is ordered to deliver the boy's head to officers who will come for it. He is in despair, for none

of the heads of the pudding-faced peasant children in the school could by any possibility be passed off as that of an aristocrat, and among the officers who are coming is one, Matsumaru, who is well acquainted with the boy's features. But his despair is converted into joy. A lady arrives with her son, a new pupil, a noble-looking boy in every way, and leaves him with the mastery. Soon follow the officers. The freshly severed head of the new pupil is brought in by Genzo, rolled in a napkin, and laid before Matsumaru, who slowly uncovers it and professes to identify it formally as that of the young Shusai. It is a very impressive scene, and I can well remember the tragic sadness depicted in the face of Matsumaru, a part which was played by Danjuro, the greatest actor on the Japanese stage. But why his sadness? He was only doing his duty. His father had been in Sugawara's service. He had been cut off from it, and fortune had placed him in that of Sugawara's enemies. He could not disobey their orders. But he still cherished the samurai ideal of duty to the former benefactors of his family which demanded any sacrifice on his side that he could render. The new pupil, on whose head he was gazing, was his own only son whom his wife had obeyed him in bringing to the school, well knowing the fate that was

## 154 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

inevitably before him. There is no historic foundation for this story, in fact the time of the drama was anterior to the development of the ideal relations between lord and vassal; but it vividly illustrates, both in the action of Genzo the schoolmaster, and in the sacrifice of Matsumaru and his wife and son, the feudal conception of the duty of a samurai as towards his lord. The death of Matsumaru himself would have been useless. That of his son was to him infinitely more bitter than his own would have been, but it saved the life of his lord's child.

While feudalism and the dual government were still in existence, the Emperor, secluded from the gaze and knowledge of all his subjects, was to them a mere abstraction though a divine one. Now that he is their actual ruler, taking a living part in their affairs and seen by all, the loyalty is formerly rendered to the feudal lord transferred to him, and the attitude of the samurai towards his lord is now that of the whole nation to their loved and worshipped sovereign.

The samurai has not fallen from his high degree of honour under the influence of Western civilisation; but the people, the former serf-like commoners, are rapidly and surely rising to his old level. Adventitious circumstances crushed

them for centuries, but their real spirit only slumbered. It never wholly died. When I look back upon them as I knew them first more than forty years ago and think of them as they are now, I sometimes find it difficult to recognise the present generation as the offspring of the fathers and grandfathers whom I knew. And yet they are the same stock ; but how different in their outlook !

Two incidents in my own experience often present themselves to my thoughts as symbolising what Japan was and what it is. My first arrival was on a day in May, a day of glorious sunshine, when a tranquil sea was softly rippling under a gentle summer breeze. As the P. & O. steamer in which I was travelling steamed up Tokio Bay we overtook H.M.S. *Rodney*, a three-decked, wooden battleship of the olden style, then the flagship of the British Fleet on the China Station, which was slowly proceeding up the bay under all sail, courses, top-gallant, royal, and studding, and the breeze just sufficient to fill the canvas and to give the ship a little more than headway through the water. As she very slowly forged ahead, so slowly as hardly to raise a ripple at her bow or to leave the trace of a wake at her stern, with her mass of snow-white sails, extending from the lofty mast-heads to the deck and spreading far

beyond her bulwarks, with the white naval ensign proudly flowing from her peak, with her black sides relieved by the three rows of white port-holes and by the long range of hammocks stowed above them, she seemed in all her graceful symmetry the living embodiment of everything that is most beautiful and best in the romance of the sea. When, thirty-three years later, I took my last look at the shores of Japan, which, I must confess, I did from the deck of a German steamer,—one that I believe is now safe in New York harbour,—we happened to meet, a very few hours after we had passed the harbour mouth, one of the Japanese pre-Dreadnought battleships performing a full-speed trial on the high sea. She was churning the water as she rushed through it into masses of foam that rose high and flung clouds of spray over her bows, and stretching far behind her was a wake of high tumultuous waves. Her dull grey hull was unbroken by one single patch of relieving colour, and her mighty funnels were pouring out masses of dense black smoke that seemed to cloud the skies to the very horizon ; her ugly, stunted, tripod masts were without a trace of even a furled sail, and her decks were encumbered with all the machinery that is necessary to the full equipment of a battleship of these days. She showed



no graceful beauty, and the most imaginative of poets would have lamentably failed had he endeavoured to associate her in any way with romance. But she conveyed an irresistible impression of efficiency and strength, of the highest results of human skill and ingenuity.

And so it was with Japan. When I arrived there it was the land of romance. Feudalism was still alive, still unconscious of its coming doom. Silk-clad and sword-girt samurai still paced the streets with solemn dignity, and the great feudal lords, still vested with their fiefs, still haughty in the consciousness of their dignity and power as the lords of domains in which their will was almost the sole law, passed through the same streets in gorgeous palanquins of lacquer inlaid with gold, shrouded from the vulgar gaze, and surrounded by long retinues of armed retainers, while passing commoners bowed their heads to the ground in humble reverence. No wheeled traffic disturbed the silent decorum of the great city. Everything was solemn, stately, dignified. It was a land of romance, in which one was transported, not in thought but in actual life, back to the days of Richard Cœur de Lion, a fairyland in the picturesqueness of its people and in its own natural beauties. When I left it, the romance had gone. The samurai and the lords had

become undistinguishable by outward signs from the common herd, and elbowed their way through the streets unnoticed and uncared-for. The din of electric cars never ceased and steam factories added to their noise. Japan had become a land of materialism, a great military and commercial Power. But the spirit of the people is unchanged. It is still to-day what it was when the great Mongol was triumphantly driven from the shores of the Island Empire.

## VII

# THE SPIRIT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND ITS ALLIES

BY SIDNEY LOW, M.A.

OF the immediate causes and significance of the great conflict which has absorbed and appalled the world, much has been written since the summer of 1914; and I suppose that there are few intelligent persons in any country who have not arrived at a definite opinion upon the subject. It is not my intention to traverse this familiar ground, or to resume the controversies which have been worked out so exhaustively in official publications and in the vast polemical literature that has accumulated round the origins of the war. It is only natural that the Parliamentary Papers, the pamphlets, the newspapers, and the monographs should be mainly concerned with the transactions which are the immediate cause of the catastrophe that has befallen our civilisation. For the sternly prac-

tical business before the allied nations it is essential to apportion the responsibility, and to convince ourselves that the guilt does not lie upon our shoulders. "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just"; and our publicists and public men have been most occupied with the patriotic and necessary duty of showing that it is our opponents and not ourselves who have plunged the world into strife.

But those who try to be students of history, who endeavour to trace the working of the forces that determine the fate of men and nations, may look a little further below the surface. Accident, and the faults or errors of individuals, may precipitate wars and revolutions; but they do not account for them, any more than the church-tower which draws the lightning from the clouds accounts for the thunder-storm. We admit this reasoning when we are dealing with the remoter past; we do not now say that Spain resigned the sceptre of the seas to England because Philip II. was a fanatic and Queen Elizabeth a flirt. It would indeed render history a tale of little meaning if we could suppose that a convulsion which shakes whole continents to their foundations could be due merely to the recklessness of a statesman, the madness of a monarch, or the miscalculations of a handful of strategists and diplomatists.

The present war is the legacy from the wars and the peace-conventions of the past. It is a stage in that struggle for freedom and nationality which has occupied the peoples of the civilised world since their main interest ceased to be concentrated on religion. Two supreme ideas have during this period dominated their thoughts—the idea of democracy and the idea of nationality. The one has conditioned the internal development of the nations; the other has had the largest influence on that clash and contact of states which make up international politics. The two conceptions have sometimes been separated, but often they have worked in association. Every people, or every group of persons linked together by a common origin, a common sentiment, a common language, and a common tradition, has been inspired by what one may perhaps describe, in terms which a popular philosophy has rendered fashionable, as the Will to Live and the Will to Power. It has sought, with more or less definiteness of purpose, to gain control of its corporate affairs; and it has sought also to realise its own consciousness of national and racial identity. Lord Bryce has recently pointed out, in a learned and suggestive lecture, how comparatively novel in the history of the world is the idea of nationality. For many ages, men in Europe, as they still do in

the East, classified themselves under religious or dynastic, rather than territorial, divisions. They were Mussulman or Hindus, Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, or Orthodox Greeks, subjects of the House of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, or the King of France, rather than the members of a national group marked off distinctly from every other.

In the Middle Ages the existence of these groups had been veiled by the shadowy claims of the Holy Roman Empire and by the spiritual dominion of the Pope. With the Renaissance and the Reformation, the old concept of unity in State and Church lost its meaning; but the new political entities were created for the most part round ruling families, and it was the king or the prince who represented the national idea, so far as it was represented at all. To the statesmen and the lawyers there seemed nothing unnatural in the fact that men of different races, different religions, and different languages, should be combined in allegiance to one ruler, or that they should wage war under his direction against men more closely akin to them than their own fellow subjects. And as with the decay of local self-government in most countries, except Britain, these rulers had become autocratic, there seemed nothing unreasonable in the transfer of territory from one

dynastic control to another without much regard to the feelings and wishes of the inhabitants.

The history of the past three centuries is in large part the story of the struggle of one national group after another to emancipate itself from alien authority, and to unite with other groups of its own type and kind: to substitute for the accidental and artificial composite state created by war, conquest, diplomacy, and dynastic alliance, a natural union based on physical, biological, ethnological, and geographical elements. Often the process was complicated by the effort to secure internal liberty, and to obtain release from domestic, as well as foreign, tyranny.

Both aspects are prominent in the struggle of the United Netherlands against Spain in the sixteenth century; one only in the Great Rebellion in England, in the seventeenth. In the eighteenth the spirit of nationality and democracy lay dormant while the powerful monarchies were engaged in material and economic competition; but it awakened to vigorous life when the American Colonists rose against the British monarchy, and asserted the right of a community to be free from alien dominion, with the principle of government for the people and by the people, on a scale hitherto

unknown. Never had the Will to Live manifested itself with so much energy. The American Revolution set the torch to the piled flax which has been smoking or blazing ever since. It was the true parent of the French Revolution which in its inception was an attempt to vindicate not only the Rights of Man but also the Rights of Nations, though it ended in a military despotism which trampled upon both.

The revolutionary era ended with the autocratic and military monarchies apparently more firmly planted than ever. But everywhere the seeds which had been sown in the French and the American revolutions were sprouting from the ground. Men's minds were fermenting with the thought of democracy, and with what Treitschke has called the intoxicating theory of the right of nationality. The unrest, the international complications, the campaigns, of the hundred years that followed the peace of 1815 were in the main due to the attempts of the various peoples to vindicate these rights. The revolt of the South American Republics against Spanish rule, the Greek War of Independence, the successive attempts of the Balkan peoples to emancipate themselves from Turkish power, the separation of Belgium from Holland, the Polish and Hungarian insurrections, the liberation of Italy from Austrian and Bourbon rule,



and its consolidation into a united kingdom, and the creation of the German Empire under the hegemony of the Prussian monarchy—all these were manifestations of the Will to Live on the part of the ethnic groups, the working out in practice of the spirit of nationality.

It would have worked with less friction and involved fewer calamities if the statesmen who unravelled the iron skein of Napoleonic conquest had paid more respect to the sentiment and had shown more consciousness of its significance. Unfortunately they were still under the bondage of the old dynastic and legal conceptions. In their reconstruction of Europe they paid more regard to the technical rights of sovereigns than to the rights of the peoples. The Congress of Vienna put back the clock instead of putting it forward. It made no attempt to give a real unity to Italy and Germany; it ignored the individuality of the minor peoples; it left Poland partitioned among its robber neighbours; it did not release the Magyars and the Southern Serbs from the autocracy of Vienna, or the Balkan Christians from the bigotry of Constantinople; it fastened afresh the Turkish fetters upon Macedonia, Armenia, Syria, Egypt. Europe has been engaged by arms, diplomacy, insurrection, and often by secret conspiracy, in making good this incomplete and ill-conceived

settlement. The war between France and Austria in 1859, the Crimean War, the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, the Franco-German War of 1870, the Russo-Turkish War of 1878, the wars between Turkey and Greece, between Bulgaria and Serbia, between Turkey and the united Balkan States, and then between those States themselves, were all closely associated with the principle of nationality, in its assertion or its denial. Other causes and agencies were at work, but this is always present and is usually fundamental. Take this last and greatest war of all. Would it have occurred if the unification of Germany had not been achieved by blood and iron under a militarist monarchy, if Prussia, Russia, and Austria had not locked their frontiers over the dismembered body of Poland, if the Slavs of the South had been enabled to obtain autonomy and union without rebellion, conspiracy, and bloodshed ?

One may put it in another way. In every energetic people there seem to be at work, and sometimes in conflict, the impulses which one may call synthetic and analytic, expansionist and concentrative, the spirit of nationality, and the spirit of freedom. Every people or group of peoples would like to be great ; it would like to be a nation ; and it would like to manage its affairs for the material and moral

benefit of the general body of its members. Empire, national realisation, and social progress based on individual liberty are the aims which underlie the political action of governments, and parties ; and it is felt that a people has not achieved complete self-expression, in the modern sense, unless it has approached within measurable distance of all three results.

If we turn to the British Empire we may ask ourselves how far these ideals of liberty, nationhood, and expansion have been realised or are likely to be realised. And I think we shall find that in this respect we have attained a greater measure of success than any other people in the past and the present. Let me hasten to deprecate any self-righteousness over this result. Our success is not due so much to any special superiority of character, or even to that supreme political instinct which we sometimes modestly ascribe to ourselves, as to fortunate geographical and historical conditions. Other peoples, I daresay, might have done as well if equally favoured ; but they were not. The development of nationalism, liberty, and empire can only proceed healthily and fruitfully by three definite stages. First, national independence ; then national freedom ; finally, if the opportunity comes, the wider synthesis that leads to imperial rule, the founda-

tion of colonies, and the control of dependencies. It was the good fortune of Britain, safe behind the bulwark of her encircling seas, to achieve national unity while the process was still in suspense or incomplete among the countries of continental Europe. The Norman and the Plantagenet monarchs made England a single and complete nation-state; and the work was consummated in the Tudor and Stuart times when Wales and Scotland and Ireland formed part of the same integration, without, it must be said, abandoning that local self-consciousness which in one case at least continues to take somewhat inconvenient forms.

It was our further good fortune that this process did not involve, as it did in other unitary nations of Europe, the extinction of popular government, and the creation of autocratic monarchs. France and Spain were indeed also united; but they were united under a personal rule so strong that it almost destroyed those municipal institutions which had descended from the Germanic tribesmen and the Roman provinces. In Britain these organs of popular government were retained; and they gradually developed into the parliamentary and administrative oligarchy, and finally into a democratic system as complete as any the modern world has known. And it was only after

popular liberty had been laid on a firm basis that the era of imperial expansion set in, and that the island-nation became the mother of a whole family of daughter-states scattered over the earth, and the ruler and protector of vast subject populations.

Here there are the three stages following each other in a natural evolution. First, the community is organised as a nation; then, its nationality secured beyond dispute or question, it is able to become self-governing and free; afterwards it enlarges its boundaries by settlement or conquest, and establishes itself as the predominant partner in a world-association of its own and other races. So the opportunity for the greater synthesis was given to a state which had already acquired an understanding of the meaning of nationhood and liberty. We have made, or I should rather say we are making, an empire which can be, and may be, compacted of free peoples and free nations.

It would be idle to affirm that we have always been faithful to those precepts. In one signal instance we were conspicuously false to them. We lost the most splendid of all our daughter-peoples, because we were false to our teaching, our own recognised tenets. The American Revolution was caused largely by the formalism of parliamentarians and politicians, who did

## 170 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

not recognise the claim of every association of Britons to regulate their own affairs. But the insurgent colonies were only asserting a right which had been dimly understood from the beginning of our career of expansion. In spite of the errors of statesmen, and the selfishness of the governing classes, whether they were aristocratic or mercantile, it is not true to say, as our enemies sometimes say, that the Britannic realm is a robber empire. Mistakes in abundance have been made ; class interests have been too often dominant ; political groups and factions in London have frequently shown themselves careless of local sentiment beyond the seas or irresponsible to it. Yet it can be contended that on the whole the ethical idea has prevailed, and that mere force and greed have seldom been the motives of action, still less have they been acknowledged and glorified.

It was the misfortune of Prussia that she felt herself obliged to effect the consolidation of Germany through blood and iron. If we too, in our progress over the world, have sometimes had recourse to the same terrible agencies we have done so with genuine reluctance. Large as is the part that war has played in our imperial history, there are few of our possessions which have been acquired by any conscious purpose of conquest. Much of it was obtained by

settlement in countries so thinly inhabited by tribes of sheer savages that our ancestors were justified in regarding them as waste lands. With all respect to the rights of native races I suppose it cannot be contended that the entire continent of North America could be permanently left to a few hundred thousand Indians, or that Australia could be the preserve of some handfuls of the lowest specimens of humanity. But the charter of Henry VII. to the Cabots, the first colonial charter in our annals, declares that, if any new country be discovered, "it is our will that men and women from England be freely permitted to settle therein and improve the same, under the direction of these grantees whom we hereby empower to make laws." This is the keynote to which our settlers and colonists constantly recur, and it rings through all the errors of administrators and legislators at home. Vague and misunderstood, but still vital, is the conception that a colony is a settlement or a plantation of Englishmen whose duty it is to "improve" the wilderness, and who carry with them the inalienable prerogative of being governed by laws made with their own consent.

The greater part of the dominions which are mainly inhabited by persons of European stock were obtained in this way. But even when

## 172 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

they were acquired by cession, as the outcome of a successful war, the general principle has been maintained. We have not sought to govern—at least we have never ventured to maintain that it is right to govern—European communities as subject territories: we have, on the contrary, recognised that they have the same title to govern themselves as those of our own blood. Take the case of the present province of Quebec in Canada. Here is a French-speaking area which we obtained by conquest from its original proprietors. In its early administration many mistakes were made culminating in the abortive rebellion of 1837. But these mistakes were not caused by any desire to force English ideas or English “kultur” on an alien population. “From the moment of its acquisition,” Prof. Egerton tells us, “it was sought by careful consideration of French laws and customs to secure the loyalty and affection of the new subjects.” If we went wrong in Lower Canada, it was through a well-meant but misdirected effort to enlarge the bounds of political freedom. We granted a representative assembly in 1791 to a population untrained in local self-government, and this, combined, it is true, with the tactlessness of British Governors, was the root of the ensuing trouble. If we failed temporarily here it was



surely a failing that leaned to virtue's side. And we made our failure good by permitting Canada to obtain the fullest autonomy, to develop her nationhood to the largest extent consistent with the existence of the larger association of which it is a member. The result we see in the presence of French Canadian soldiers fighting on the soil of their remote ancestors in the cause of Britain. "France," continues the authority just quoted, "has forgiven the loss of French Canada ; the French Canadians, in spite of occasional grievances, such as none of us is without, are a prosperous and contented people, and have no wish for the sympathy or crocodile's tears of the proved enemies of the cause they hold most dear, the maintenance of separate nationalism within a political union."

In two different quarters of the world it has been decreed that Britain should acquire by force of arms dominions over people of that sturdy race, so closely akin to our own, which was reared among the sea-dunes and flat meadows of Holland. In America and in Africa we have come into contact with Dutch subjects and fellow-citizens. Towards the close of the seventeenth century we seized that province settled by the Dutch which is now New York State and was then the New Netherland.

## 174 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

It was a violent, even an immoral, transaction in that long series of brutal and aggressive acts which made up the history of the two searivals at this period. But no sooner had we appropriated the Dutch territory than we gave it all the rights of an English Colony. The day after the surrender the local municipal bodies were permitted to assemble and do business as if nothing had occurred. The British Government interfered with no man's property, his religion, his language, or his opinions ; it placed all the new subjects of the Crown, English, Dutch, Walloons, Swedes, and others, on an equal footing ; and after a brief interval of unrest it conferred upon this annexed province political rights as large as had been granted to any colony of the purest English stock. The New York Charter of Liberties in 1691, declared that " no tax whatever shall be levied on his Majesty's subjects in the province or on their estates, on any pretence whatever, but by the act and consent of the representatives of the people in General Assembly convened." So it came about that New York clung longest to the British connection, and its foreign-descended inhabitants were loyalist in the midst of the revolt of the other American Colonies.

We pass to more thorny ground when we touch upon our relations with Dutch colonists

in South Africa. No one can suggest that the history of that dominion has been tranquil since the Cape was transferred from the rule of the Dutch East India Company to that of the British Crown. Many errors have been committed, not on one side only, and many calamities and disasters have ensued. Yet, if we look back on this chequered and sometimes blood-stained record, we cannot honestly say that its misfortunes were due to any deliberate exercise of arbitrary power by the sovereign state. We erred through the ignorance of local conditions, through carelessness and neglect, through want of imagination, through an excessive legalism, and a well-meaning, but too hasty, humanitarianism. Dutch discontent at the Cape was not in the first instance caused by political tyranny or by nationalist sentiment. It was due to the treatment of the natives prescribed by the highest philanthropic motives at home. To the Dutch farmers this praiseworthy anxiety for the well-being of a coloured population seemed foolish, and they trekked into the districts beyond the Orange River to escape from our jurisdiction. The subsequent misfortunes were in the main due to our refusal to assume the responsibilities of sovereignty over those whom we still regarded as British subjects, while we were

## 176 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

reluctant to abandon our protection of the native races.

It is not a chapter of our annals to which British statesmanship can turn with satisfaction. Yet one may say *finis coronat opus*. The end came with the war that is still living in our memory. Upon the rights and wrongs of that conflict controversy is not yet wholly silent. When it was over the world was astonished, it was almost appalled, at the plenitude of our adaptation of the principle of self-government to a territory which had so lately flamed with insurrection, and had been crushed into surrender by force of arms. Within a few years of the withdrawal of the great host from the conquered soil the annexed republics received the fullest rights of local autonomy, and were placed on the same footing as the other self-governing nations which owe allegiance to the British Crown.

On the sequel it is superfluous to insist. If ever a vindication were needed of the principles of national autonomy and individual liberty, it would be found in the spectacle before our eyes to-day. The insurgents of a dozen years ago are perilling their lives under the flag of Britain, and the most brilliant soldier of the rebellion is now their chief and leader in a campaign against the Empire's enemies. We may legiti-

mately compare this method of Empire-building by consent with that of other states which have aimed at the forcible incorporation of alien elements. French Canada and Dutch Africa furnish an instructive contrast to Prussian Poland, to Alsace-Lorraine, to North Schleswig. Prussia has pursued, perhaps she has been compelled to pursue, a different policy from our own. Under the steam-roller of Germanism she has endeavoured to squeeze her dependencies and acquisitions into uniformity with herself, crushing, or rather failing to crush, their individuality, their language, their national type. Bismarck long objected to annex South German and Austrian territory on the ground that it could not be assimilated. "We cannot," he said in 1866, "use these Ultramontanes, and we must not swallow more than we can digest." No one will question the capacity of the Teutonic digestive apparatus; but it must be overtaxed when it tries to absorb too many foreign bodies. Political dyspepsia can only be avoided by an Empire which prefers association to deglutition, which does not devour its children or its subjects but makes them members of its family, which aims at an organic synthesis rather than a mechanical compression.

There are, however, those who affirm that at least in our tropical and Oriental dependencies

we have ourselves adopted the latter method, that in Asia and Central Africa, if not in the temperate regions, we have been careless of nationality and liberty. Many people in Germany hold that, however we may have acted in America and Australia, we are in the East and the tropics a robber-state. If they would pay closer attention to our imperial history they might modify their judgments. We have not always managed our black and brown populations well; colonial governors are not always wise, and permanent officials are sometimes foolish. Nor is it without long travail and many difficulties that we have gradually approximated to a right understanding of the problem of dealing with non-European races. Yet I do not think it can ever be fairly said that we have for any long period, as a nation or a government, consciously ignored our ethical obligations towards these subject peoples.

Our attitude towards them, after the first stage of mere mercantile exploitation was passed, has usually been that of a rather exaggerated paternalism. As soon as Englishmen awakened to the fact that they were acquiring a great tropical Empire, they showed an immense, one may say a sentimental, regard for their coloured clients. Nothing is more re-

markable than the urgency with which English public opinion insisted on the transformation of the East India Company from a money-making corporation into a bureaucracy intended to promote sound administration and the welfare of its native subjects. It is indeed rather remarkable that in the latter part of the eighteenth century Englishmen displayed much more interest in their native dependants than in their own kinsfolk in the colonies. Dr. Johnson, who gave robust expression to the popular prejudices of the time, said that he was willing to love any member of the human race except an American. London society, while it ignored the American settlers, and left them to the contemptuous intolerance of the politicians, showed a most anxious solicitude for Hindus and negroes.

When we look back on the establishment of British dominion in India we cannot restrain our enthusiasm for the chief figures in that magnificent adventure. But their contemporaries had a very qualified admiration for Clive and Warren Hastings, and were much more concerned in considering whether, in the process of adding a new empire to the British realms, they had always been scrupulously correct in their dealings with the natives of the country.

The coldness of Fox and Burke and other

## 180 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

Whig statesmen to the great empire-builders strikes us with amazement; but it is at least a proof that the best minds of Britain were determined that we should not abuse our power over the weaker peoples under our sway. It was a departure from the principles of British liberty that any human beings should be under the absolute control of another set, and it could only be tolerated on the assumption that the dependent race should be managed for its own benefit rather than ours. I think it may fairly be claimed that we have acted in this spirit for nearly two centuries, in India, in the West Indies, in the Pacific, and of late in Egypt and the Sudan, where the hard-won lessons of Indian officialism have been applied with fuller knowledge and a wider sympathy by such administrators as Lord Cromer, Sir Reginald Wingate, and Lord Kitchener. In this region we are just now exhibiting our respect for the idea of nationality, and we have refrained from destroying the separate individuality of a subject state which we have been compelled to withdraw from the jurisdiction of a hostile sovereign. We do not annex Egypt; we leave it to develop its own existence under our protection.

It may be true that in the era of paternal despotism through which we have passed, we



have not always done wisely. But our mistakes, here again, have not been due to selfishness or tyranny so much as to the lack of imaginative sympathy and systematic knowledge. In our desire to improve our native dependants we have sometimes been a little too heavily impressed by the idea that we are bearing the "white man's burden"; and we have been disconcerted to find that what we think good for them they do not always think good for themselves.

It may be added that we have somewhat hurriedly transferred our English institutions to a soil very ill-prepared to nourish them. Thus it happened with Macaulay's well-meant attempts to impart to young Hindus and young Mussulmans under a tropic sky the kind of education which no doubt was suitable enough for students in an English seminary. We have not always considered how strange the most familiar Western conceptions may seem to an Eastern mind. When the Provincial Councils in Egypt were first appointed by popular election, several difficulties arose. In one district of Cairo there was no election, because there were no candidates and not a single elector put in an appearance. Elsewhere, Lord Cromer tells us, the electors could only be got to poll through the energetic action of the village policeman. After they had voted, Sir Eldon Gorst reported

## 182 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

that "a certain amount of dissatisfaction was expressed when the electors discovered that neither the candidate nor the government proposed to pay them for their trouble."

Paternal despotism has its drawbacks; but it is at least better than the arrogant egoism which is intolerant of the feelings, as well as the rights, of subject populations. And there is slowly evolving something that is better than either: the spirit of sympathetic understanding which can recognise racial differences without assuming racial inferiority, and which regards the control of Oriental or aboriginal peoples as an educational process that will gradually prepare them for self-government and national association with the communities of our own and kindred stocks. This is the third stage of empire, the stage which is in its infancy still, which is destined, I think, to endure through our generation and perhaps for some generations to come. It is animated by a larger conception, a more humane imperialism, than that of our generously self-confident imperialists of the past. Their view is well expressed in a fine passage of rhetoric by one of their most brilliant and accomplished teachers, the late Professor Cramb, in his *Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain*:

"If I were asked," he said, "how one could

describe in a sentence the general aim of British imperialism . . . I should answer . . . *to give all men within its borders an English mind*; to give all who come within its sway the power to look at the things of man's life, at the past, at the future, from the standpoint of an Englishman; to diffuse within its bounds that high tolerance in religion which has marked this Empire from its foundation; that reverence yet boldness before the mysteriousness of life and death, characteristic of our great poets and our great thinkers; that love of free institutions, that pursuit of ever higher justice and a larger freedom, which, rightly or wrongly, we associate with the temper and character of our race, wherever it is dominant and secure. . . . To give all men within its bounds an English mind—that has been the purpose of our Empire in the past. He who speaks of England's greatness speaks of this. Her renown, her glory, it is this, undying, imperishable, in the strictest sense of that word. For if, in some cataclysm of nature, these islands and all that they embrace were overwhelmed and sunk in sea-oblivion, if to-morrow's sun rose upon an Englandless world, still this spirit and this purpose in other lands would fare on untouched amid the wreck."

These are noble words. Yet I think they must be accepted with some reservation. I do not feel so certain as their writer that we should aim at giving all men the English mind. I have a great respect for the English mind. It is a very good mind, though it sometimes seems to find thinking a fatiguing exercise. I would

even go so far as to suggest that taken all round there is no better mind anywhere. But the English mind is not the only mind. It would be a misfortune for the British Empire if, in our affection for the English mind, we tried to do without the Celtic mind, the Gallic mind, the Latin mind, the Indian mind, I would say even the African mind. It takes all sorts to make an empire as it takes all sorts to make a world ; and the great imperial schemes of the future will aim, I believe, no more at an intellectual, than a political, uniformity. We shall rather endeavour to develop the individuality of our dependent and protected communities until they are fit to take their place alongside the sister-nations of our own race. We are doing that in India, we are doing it in Egypt, we do it in the Federated Malay States, in time perhaps we shall do it in the Sudan and Nigeria. The synthesis will be complete when at length the Empire is only a name for a great association of national groups and national units, differing in race, in origin, in religion, in social structure, but all animated and vivified by the English mind without losing the consciousness of their own identity. Such seems to be the ultimate, perhaps the final, embodiment of the Spirit of the British Empire.

The great Republic and the great Theocracy,

with which we are linked in close alliance, are faced with some problems not wholly dissimilar from those with which we have learnt, or are learning, to grapple. France and Russia are not merely great nations but they are also, like Great Britain, the rulers of vast subject populations. The administration of the French Colonies has not always been admirable, nor have our neighbours, in that new tropical empire they have built up with splendid energy in the past half century, everywhere applied the lessons which a longer experience has ingrained upon our own officials. But France has shown a regard for the rights of colonists, going in some respects beyond our own. With the affirmation of the principle of democratic equality at the Revolution, the French colonies in the West Indies were placed on the same political level as those of the parent state. By Article 6 of the Constitution of 1795 the colonies were declared integral parts of the Republic and treated as departments. There have been many changes since then; but the French colonies have never lost their right to representation in the French Chamber of Deputies, and these colonial deputies are elected by universal manhood suffrage in all the colonies, except Cochin China and Algeria where the natives do not vote. Here then it may be

said that France has for more than a century realised the idea of those British advocates of Imperial Federation who would like to see representatives from Canada, Australasia, and New Zealand sitting in the Parliament of Westminster.

The French system has aimed at assimilation ; faithful to the doctrine of equality and the centralising tradition French statesmen have tried to make their colonies as much like an outlying portion of France as the circumstances would permit. The process has, however, too often involved a wholesale destruction of native institutions, and a complete subjection of colonial and dependent populations to a bureaucracy controlled by a Central Executive. In recent years more regard has been shown to national feeling where it exists. Warned by the evil results in Cochin China of interfering with a well-developed civilisation and social system, the French have adopted a different method in Tunis, a method resembling our own in Egypt and the Indian feudatory states. The native sovereign and the native administration have been left in being, with French residents and advisers to exercise a general control and gradually introduce reforms. Tunis is described as almost a model protectorate, at once progressive and contented.

France has made mistakes, as we have ourselves done. Her first oversea empire was acquired, extended, and lost, in the storms of war. Her second has been won in haste from peoples mostly in a low state of civilisation, and she has never been able to bestow upon its problems the same attention as she has given to questions of domestic administration and European policy. But her colonial ideas have both largeness and generosity; and as she gains experience there is good reason to suppose that she will combine, with that cult of equality and liberty which is ingrained into her being, a wider recognition of national consciousness and sentiment among her subject populations.

If we turn to Russia, the record is chequered but not unhopeful. It would be idle to condone some chapters in the treatment of Russian conquered and subjugated territories. The crime of the Partition of Poland, in which the guilt of Russia was far worse than that of Austria, and only less than that of Prussia, admits of no excuse. It was an act of great wickedness which has been amply avenged upon those who perpetrated or permitted it; for the sacrifice of Poland was the beginning of that era of European unrest whose consequences we are reaping to-day. But we may hope that the sin will at length be expiated, and with the

## 188 THE SPIRIT OF THE ALLIES

close of this great war Poland will be released from her fetters, and will once more take her place among the nations, a self-dependent and self-governing state under Russian protection. The same may be said of Finland. This interesting and progressive Scandinavian province asks only for the restoration of the autonomous constitution under which it lived in content until sixteen years ago.

Though the Russian autocracy has too often lent its ear to the counsels of reaction and oppression, it must be remembered that the structure of Russian society is essentially democratic, and that Russian expansion has been by no means solely due to conquest and militarism. Much the largest part of that enormous area which forms Asiatic Russia was obtained by a true process of settlement. Siberia, in fact, is a great colony, the greatest example of colonisation by peaceful and industrial methods which the world has ever seen. "In the transformation of Siberia," says an American writer, "from a dread waste into a home for millions, Russia is true to her old character as a conqueror of the hostile forces of nature." True, Russia in the past two centuries has taken part in the struggle of the European monarchies for ascendancy by force of arms. But in the main the work of the North Slavonic race has been



different, and it bears a singular resemblance, under very dissimilar geographical conditions, to that of the British. Just as Britain, using the sea for her highway, has gained for civilisation the great untenanted or desolate continents of North America and Australia, so has Russia spread herself by land over Northern Asia, where she is developing the latent riches of the soil and the subsoil, and winning her victories not over subjugated nations but over solitude, and distance, and the white immensities of the silent plains. In this sense Russia is a colonising Power, the greatest of all colonising Powers except Britain; and like Britain her Empire is made up, partly, it is true, of subject and conquered territories, but most largely of settlements of her own people.

The framework then seems laid already for such a reconstruction of the Russian Empire as is already traced in outline for the British. Here the dialysis must precede the synthesis, the loosing must come before the binding together. The colossal unwieldy bulk may attain ease by granting local autonomy to its constituent peoples and states, as it has done to its Asiatic dependencies of Bokhara and Khiva, and as it did in Finland for ninety years after 1809. Russia, made up of many nations, self-conscious and self-governing, but united,

Poland, Finland, the Baltic Provinces, the Caucasus, Siberia, with an equal recognition of the rights of all races and religions, may become a Federated Empire of the Slavonic, Lithuanian, Tartar, and Turanian peoples, in friendly contact with that Federation of the South, mainly Slavonic, which will be built up by the union of Serbs, Croats, Bulgars, Slovenes, perhaps also of Czechs, Roumanians, and it may be even of Albanians and Magyars.

May one then not hope that in this direction the evolution of the future tends? Empire, nation, democracy: these three ideas, terrible and pregnant, that have so rent and shaken mankind in their struggle for realisation, may not we believe that the time is approaching for them to be set in harmony? Many of us, I suppose, have lately allowed ourselves a certain relief, under the burden and sorrow of the moment, by indulging in some dream of the world-order which will arise after the world-war is ended. It is at least as legitimate a speculation as any other that by this process of synthesis and dialysis, on which I have laid stress, the new order will be built. Can we be bold enough to envisage a future when government for the people, of the people, by the people, a democracy organised for social reform and spiritual enlightenment, will be established in

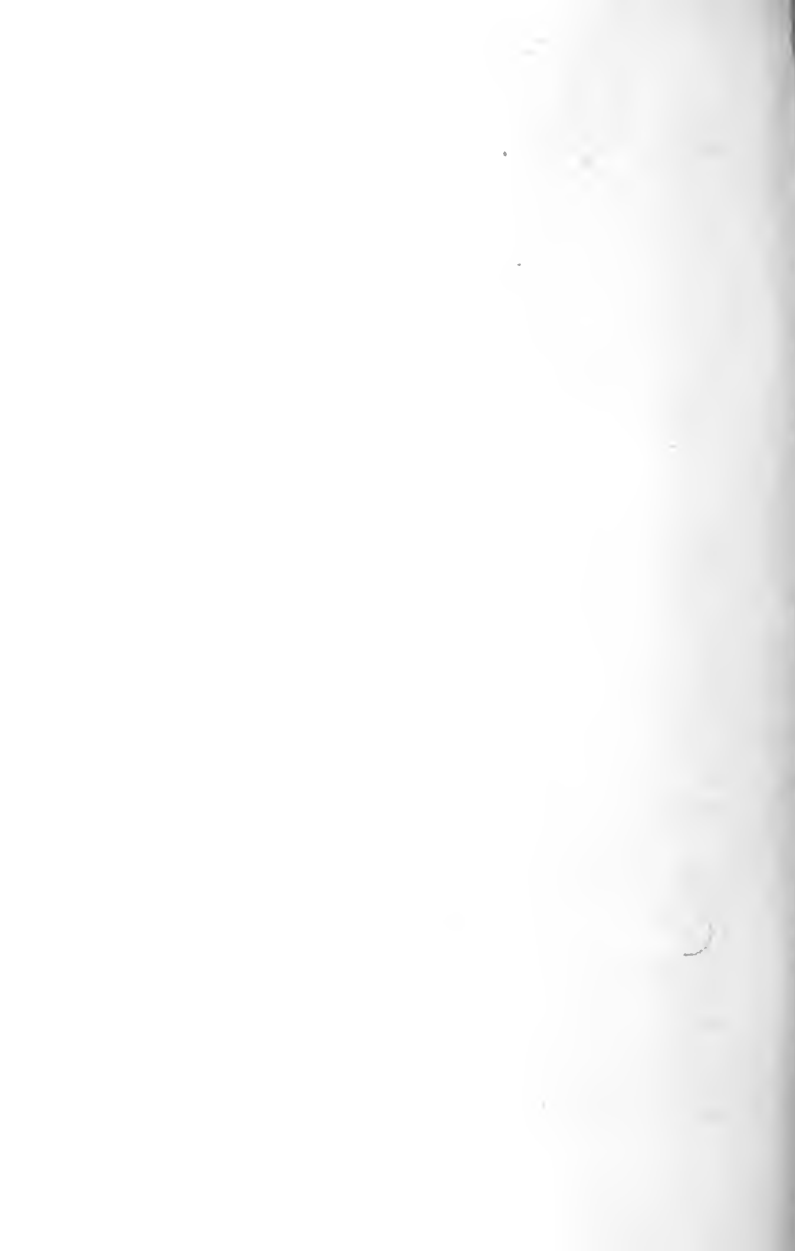
all the countries of the earth ? May we believe that each of those free democracies will be a free nation, inspired by that energy of individual will which only the sense of nationhood can bestow ? And may we not expect that it will often link itself with others in some great Imperial Confederacy, in which nations, peoples, races, each retaining its own identity, and its own autonomy, will work together for common purposes, with all the strength that the larger union of economic, political, and intellectual forces brings ? I seem to see a Britain, a Russia, a Slavonia—and why not also a regenerated Austria, a purged and liberalised Germany ?—grown to empire-states of this kind ; side by side with great unitary republics like France, great federal republics like the United States ; with the smaller nations, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, still free to live their own separate lives, if they do not prefer to enter one of the wider circles, or to construct some association of their own, such as, for instance, a union of the Scandinavian kingdoms would be. The minor national units would retain their individuality, their character, their specific and distinctive culture, while the greater agglomerations could find scope for their ambitions in other fields than war or conquest.

Is it the mere vagueness of a wandering fancy

that relapses into such speculations? Even if so, one may be worse occupied. I remember reading the accounts of a curious episode in the Persian Gulf campaign of last autumn. After the defeat of the Turks at Sahil on the Euphrates estuary, the enemy were retreating in great disorder across the level plain. "The British troops rose and poured a withering fire into them, while the batteries sprayed them with shrapnel. Effective pursuit was out of the question though the enemy were followed for about a mile. The 33rd Cavalry were eager, but horsemen cannot charge through a sticky swamp. Presently even the British batteries ceased firing, for the oddest but most imperative of reasons. The fugitive Turks had passed from their view, and were lost in a mirage. To the gunners it seemed as though there were trees and shining water where shortly before there had been nothing but the bare plain and the scattered and retreating enemy. The curious thing was that the watchers, perched high on the distant transports, saw no mirage at all, and wondered why the guns had stopped firing on the routed enemy, who were quite visible from the ships."

So it may be with us, who peer dimly through the fog of war, the tumult and the turmoil that fill the earth about us. It may be that

if we can raise ourselves to some little altitude above these crowding vapours, we may see, slanting on the plains beyond, the sunlight of a larger peace, and faintly upon the horizon we may trace the outlines of that new order, wherein the synthesis and the dialysis will be alike complete, the Will to Live will work in harmony with the Will to Power, and Empire, Nationality, Democracy, will be reconciled at last.



## APPENDIX

### FRANCE IN WAR TIME

BY SIDNEY LOW, M.A.

#### I. THE SPIRIT OF THE NATION

By the courtesy of General Joffre and the French War Office I was permitted, in January 1915, to visit some portions of the Allied battle-line in France, to gain some impression of the manner in which the country has braced itself to resist the strain of this colossal campaign, and to examine at close quarters the military arrangements and the conditions prevailing in the war-zone.

Though the visit was all too brief, it was long enough to bring one closer to the facts, and to give one an insight into certain realities which the imagination, playing freely round the austere framework of the official bulletins, does not supply. One grasped something of the meaning of that strange combination of emotional energy and stern, mechanical precision which is modern war. One saw, perhaps, as much of this as can be seen by those who are unwilling

or unable to expose themselves to its savage hardships and appalling risks.

There was much in our surroundings to make one lose a grip at times of the situation. Often it needed an effort to remember, as we sped about the *chaussées* or walked in those trim towns of the Marne and the Aisne, that we were in a country on which the heel of an inexorable foe is planted like iron. Would Britain bear such an aspect if half the counties south of the Thames had been in the hands of an invading army for six months? I do not know. But at any rate, to me, coming from England, with its anxious preoccupation with the war, the atmosphere seemed strangely calm. That is the impression France makes upon the visitor in these days. It strikes upon you as you travel from the Channel coast; it deepens when you are in Paris—grave, composed, quietly confident Paris. Perhaps it is felt more strongly still as you approach the zone of war itself.

France, after the first great shock of August and September 1914, after the terrible onrush of the German hosts had been checked and turned, faced the situation with an admirable fortitude. There were those who anticipated that her whole social and political organisation would go to pieces under the tension of war and invasion. The French Government and the French people determined that it should not be so. They were resolved that the oldest and most finished civilisation of the modern world



should not break to pieces even though the foe were not only at the gates of France, but well within the portals. Behind that long line of trenches and ramparts and gun positions along the Eastern frontier, the life of the country goes on. The spirit of *la nouvelle France* is everywhere. We English have sometimes deemed our "lively neighbours," as the old phrase went, frivolous and excitable. But there is a dignity, a restraint, a quiet distinction, a sober cheerfulness about this people in its present phase, which may teach us much. Even if the Teuton hordes should trample upon the fair body of France, they will not kill her ardent soul. There is less flurry about the war, less eager clatter of voices about it, than there is in England. It is enough that all the young armed manhood of France is drawn, like a wall of bronze, from the sea to the Swiss mountains, to bear back the invader. They, with the wise, laconic Joffre to direct them, will achieve their task. And the rest of the nation is in reserve, talking less than usual, laughing but seldom, yet hard at work to supply their needs, and to look to it that when the tempest has passed by France shall still be intact, rich, thrifty, industrious, artistic, able to hand down to the generations to come all that she has derived from an incomparable past. It is a demonstration of moral force, of economic stability, such as one may conjecture no other nation could exhibit.

The aspect of Paris in these days is curiously

impressive. When one remembers that the invaders have been at the very outskirts of the capital, that people have been killed in its streets by bombs from German aerostats which may renew their visits any day, when one reflects how often and how easily this population has been wrought up to paroxysms of uncontrollable emotion, one might expect the city to be in a whirlwind of excitement over the campaign. But this is far indeed from being the case. Paris has learned self-restraint, and it keeps its feelings under control. It is grave, sober, self-possessed. On the evening of my arrival, a warning had reached the French War Office that a German air squadron was making for Paris. Instantly every street lamp on the boulevards and in every main thoroughfare was extinguished, and for two hours the city was in such inky darkness that you could not see across the pavement. But there was no panic, no sign of alarm. It was just one of those inevitable incidents to which people have grown accustomed by this time, and which they take as part of the day's work : the hard and anxious day's work which is before the country, and which the country intends to get through.

Many of the Paris hotels have been turned into hospitals, but the transport of the wounded is managed very quietly, and the ambulances are not much in evidence. What, perhaps, strikes one most, coming from London, is the absence of soldiers. In our metropolis khaki is

everywhere ; in the Strand and Piccadilly, in the restaurants and clubs, every fourth man seems to be wearing it. There is no such display of the military garb in Paris. I dropped in at one of those fashionable tea-rooms where *tout Paris* has been accustomed to foregather in the afternoons since our English habit has become the mode. The aspect of the place was much as usual, and there was the customary atmosphere of refined mondaine luxury. There were ladies in elegant, if subdued, toilettes—black is the colour just now for feminine dress—and a good sprinkling of men, some even of the military age, arrayed with civil correctitude ; but I only noticed three military uniforms, and of these one was British. People talk of the war, but in a reticent fashion. It is too serious a subject for light and easy conversation. France is conscious, to the innermost fibre of her being, of this appalling conflict which makes such terrible inroads upon her vitality. There is nothing in it to enjoy, nothing that does not affect her with repugnance and revolt. But she will not dwell upon it more than is necessary, and even in the midst of its sacrifices and its trials she goes steadily on with the occupations and interests that will have to be pursued when this nightmare has passed from the earth. Paris, though she goes to bed early and is not just now entertaining the pleasure-seekers of the world, is still very much herself.

One notes this spirit prevalent right up to the

very edge and trimming of the war belt. Our first centre was Epernay, that pleasant town of the Champagne country. It is a prosperous little place in normal times, for its miles of vaulted cellars hide the stores of liquid gold whereby the merchants and dealers of Epernay levy tribute upon the world. Its function is to make sparkling wine, and it pursues that praiseworthy task with an activity but little abated by the storms of the hour. The local magnates, who bear names that are famous everywhere, have officers and soldiers billeted in their handsome mansions, and they are giving their leisure and their money to the national service; but they make champagne all the same. M. Chandon, of the great Moët & Chandon firm, is one of the chief organisers of the well-equipped municipal hospital in which many thousands of badly wounded men from the front have been treated. M. Pol Roger has been the mayor of the town through this agitated autumn, and there was a moment when it seemed he might suffer the fate which has befallen other brave mayors at the hands of German generals.

I was taken through the *caves* of these courteous wine merchants and found them a scene of peaceful industry. Male labour is a little short, but there still seemed plenty of able-bodied men engaged in all the complicated operations of the *vendange*. France, it would appear, is far from having exhausted its reserves; and nervous gourmands need be under no apprehension that

there will be any scarcity of champagne in the years that follow. Outside, in the streets of Epernay, there were few signs of the crisis, except for the soldiers one met everywhere, and for the sable garb of mourning that is too sadly in evidence just now all over France. But the shops are open, the people go about their ordinary avocations, there is no indication of scarcity, want, or privation. In Germany one hears they eat bread of rye and potatoes. In Epernay we lunched and dined at the excellent railway station and restaurant as well and as cheaply as one does at other times; that is to say, far better and cheaper than in any English city of ten times the population of this small provincial town. Here, at Epernay, it is not hard to forget that France is fighting for her life.

Yet Epernay has had its share of the active operations, and is very close to them still. Twice since the beginning of August it has been occupied by the Germans. When General von Bülow advanced to the Marne he held the town, and for ten days it was his headquarters. From Epernay the Germans marched towards the Aube, and it was about the small towns and villages to the south, Sézannes, La Fère Champenoise, and La Ferté, that the great French offensive in this quarter developed. Along this thirty miles of road Bülow, when his forward movement had been countered, fell back, and he halted at Epernay again before the German

front was definitely withdrawn to the line of the Aisne. The fields and slopes about that southward road look smiling and peaceful enough now, and it seems hard to believe that war is still hovering near by, and was storming through them in flame and terror a few months ago. But if you look closer you find traces in plenty of the marches and counter-marches of the hostile armies.

When the French troops retreated many of the inhabitants went with them; for they had heard tales from Belgium by that time, and had no mind to submit themselves to the mercies of the conquerors of Tirlemont and Louvain. The refugees returned afterwards, sometimes to find their cattle killed, their houses burnt or pillaged, and all their small economies wasted. They are an industrious, thrifty folk these peasants of the Champenois, and they have been busy repairing the ravages of foe and friend; but the traces are still thick upon the ground. Here and there in the meadows one will see a tiny mound of earth, and a small rough wooden cross, surmounted by a French *kepi*. It is the grave of a soldier whose body has been found and given burial. Sometimes a name will be scrawled on the wooden cross: "François Dufort — of the Line"; sometimes there is no name, and only the red and blue cap, and perhaps a few flowers placed by the villagers to tell that the man was of those who had died for France.

Other memorials there are. The fields are

holed with the pits made by the bursting shells, the small, rounded hollows scooped by the field guns, or the large, ragged, crater-like depressions several feet deep scored by the heavy cannon. There was furious firing first on the French, then on the German, field trenches all along this route ; and such buildings as there were suffered badly. For a specimen of a place of human habitation which war has reduced to utter wreck and solitude one may go to the ruined village of Morains-le-Petit, on the edge of those marshes of Saint-Gond through which the Germans made their escape, after the decisive pivoting movement had developed near Allemant, and when their best troops were in full retreat, outmanœuvred and outfought. At the close of the long day's fighting the beaten and disordered Prussians seemed fairly caught between the heights crowned by the hostile artillery in their rear and the morass in front. The French commanders looked for the surrender of a whole army corps in the morning ; for the marshes of Saint-Gond are treacherous swamps, and it was supposed that only the natives of the district knew the secret ways through them. But in the morning the pursuing commanders found to their astonishment that their enemy had got across in safety.

Afterwards it was learned how, months before the war, a syndicate of German " financiers " had been at work in that country with proposals to the local municipalities and proprietors to

spend much money in draining and developing the marshes. After much inquiry and very careful surveying of the ground, these prospectors disappeared, taking with them a fund of local information, and leaving behind a few inconspicuous slabs of luminous paint to mark the passes. So the Germans escaped, but not all of them ; and the peasants say that there are still many tall fellows in helmets and jack-boots lying there among the brown pools and the clinging weeds.

## II. IN THE ZONE OF WAR

The houses of Morains-le-Petit stand pitiful and deserted by the level road, a row of stark, bare walls, roofless and windowless. A few of the villagers still find shelter somehow among the ruined buildings, where you can have German shell cases for the asking, and cartridges by the bucketful. A woman who had kept a small wayside cabaret was making a forlorn attempt to carry on a petty commerce with passing travellers in a sort of shed behind the skeleton of her home. She told us how the people had fled in haste with the French rearguard in August, how some had come back and lost their lives in a second bombardment, how her own brother and nephew and other young men of the countryside were with the army, and no one knew what had happened to them ; perhaps they were dead, perhaps they were prisoners. These things she



related dry-eyed ; but she wept when she told us that the Germans had killed all the cows.

Not far off is the Château of Mondement, which was the Hougomont of the critical battle in this part of the field. Eight times was it taken and retaken in a single day ; until the Senegalese *tirailleurs* rushed it for the last time, and there was a desperate combat, hand to hand, in the rooms and passages of the house. On the carpets of the *salons*, and among the Louis Quinze furniture, the bleeding corpses lay, ripped up with the bayonet or battered to death by the iron bars the Africans had wrenched from the window frames. Now the gracious old mansion stands a picture of desolation, with yawning holes through its walls and turrets, and great heaps of *débris* in its courtyards and gardens.

The war has swept back from this district. But even to-day it is very near ; scarcely a dozen miles from the tranquil streets of Epernay the trenches are drawn. The dull boom of the heavy guns is heard constantly, and on the day after our arrival a couple of German aeroplanes dropped bombs, which exploded harmlessly in a field somewhere in the outskirts. Nobody takes any particular notice. “ *Encore un Taube*,” says the old lady at the *débit de tabac* from whom you are buying cigarettes and postcards, and proceeds to give you your change. One does not disturb oneself over these things in the war-zone towns.

There is the same spirit even in Rheims, that

city of many bombardments. We approach Rheims with caution, for it is well under the enemy's guns, and at frequent intervals he continues to drop shells into it. If the German artillerymen on the heights three miles away saw several motor cars approaching in company they might think our cortege that of the commander of an army, with his staff, and favour us with their attentions. So we divide our party, and steal into the town unobtrusively, past the reservist patrols and sentinels, who will not let even our officer-guides through till they have shown their passes and given the countersign for the day.

A guarded and a quiet city is Rheims ; but it is indomitably alive for all it has suffered and lost. There are thousands of its men, women, and children still left within its circuit, and they treat the German cannon with calmness, though they have good cause to appreciate their deadly force. Rheims has nearly as many miles of cellars as Epernay, and to these groined caves the people retire when the flash and roar from the hills tell them that the children of Attila are at their work again.

Behind the cathedral there is a whole quarter which is like a city of the dead, a quarter where many houses lie in tumbled ruin, and where the others stand shuttered and barricaded. But elsewhere the shops were open, people moved freely about the streets, there was a brisk little market in progress, with the thrifty French

housewife, bareheaded, basket on arm, bargaining for poultry and cheapening vegetables as energetically as ever, though perhaps less volubly. We enter a *café*, and we find it crowded with officers and apparently prosperous bourgeois, sipping their grog or coffee, smoking cigarettes, chatting, reading the newspapers. A businesslike waiter finds us a table, brings us our *consommations*, keeps an alert eye on his addition and *pourboires*, and has no leisure for conversation. *Les Boches*? Ah, we do not occupy ourselves too much with the Boches here; we have our affairs to attend to. *Enfin, si monsieur veut entendre*—but there is an insistent cry for a *punch américain*, and our garçon slips away. Nobody seems at all disturbed by the thought that at any moment a shell may come screaming out of the sky and lay this cheerful little hostelry in ruins, which was, in fact, what happened to a similar establishment hard by not so many days ago.

It was on the cathedral, as all the world knows, that the spoilers wreaked their rage. When you talk about the cathedral the Rheimois loses his nonchalant gravity and becomes fluently vehement. Well he may be. The wreck of the splendid church is enough to draw tears from a Bavarian sergent-major. True, the great towers stand, and the walls, so that the fabric, with time and labour and expense, may be, in a sense, "restored." But no restoration can give back what the German guns have taken.

The most skilful chisels of modern France cannot succeed, though they will try their best, in reproducing the exquisite statuary, the delicate lace-work in stone, that now lies in heaps of calcined rubbish before the gaunt and ragged towers; nor can our modern workshops make good the glass of the shattered windows.

It was fire from within, more than the impact from without, that did the worst havoc. There were many German wounded in the church, and the good priests had brought in heaps of straw so that these suffering enemies might lie more comfortably. When the shells passed through the walls and exploded within the building, the straw blazed fiercely, and most of the German wounded perished; and the conflagration destroyed the carved woodwork of the nave and aisles, charred the statues and stone ornamentation, and blasted the priceless glass into shards of crimson and blue and purple.

That pitiless rain of iron fell all round the western front of the cathedral, so that many of the houses about the *Place* are marked with the shrapnel spots or drilled with gaping wounds. Only, by some strange chance, the statue of Jeanne d'Arc, in the centre of the square, is left untouched by rending shell or defacing shrapnel. One has heard of it often enough in these last months, so that it is an ancient and familiar story now. Yet it is not without a thrill that one turns from the outraged glories of her great

church to the noble figure of the heroine-saint, lifting her sword on high, as if in appeal to Heaven once more against the cruelty and wrath of man.

The Germans have bombarded Rheims again and again, and they have done so not wholly from sheer spite and wantonness. There is method in their malice, though they have no excuse for selecting the cathedral as their special target. They want to show that Rheims is still an unhealthy place for French military operations. They do not like these towns and villages behind the batteries which are the French advanced bases of supply and equipment; for in them a vast amount of essential work is done for the troops in the fighting lines. Indeed, it is in this belt that there is a more incessant and continuous activity than on the actual front itself. In the latter area there are moments of the most desperate energy breaking comparatively long spells of what looks like inaction and stagnation. Survey the actual battlefield during one of these intervals, and its aspect is curiously still and bare. You see nothing and hear nothing except perhaps the mutter of heavy guns speaking somewhere else on the 500-miles line. No soldiers are visible; they are all buried underground in their trenches, which themselves, from a little distance, are only brown streaks and markings on the soil. The guns, too, though they may be heard, are seldom seen, being usually shrouded in the

woods or hidden artfully among mounds and banks and farm buildings.

But in the rear there is always bustle and movement. As we journeyed about the second ring of the war-zone we felt as if we were behind the scenes of a theatre. The stage may be silent for a space, but the carpenters and machinery men, unperceived from the "front"—that other front—are always busy. We rolled up to a small hill village a few miles from the advanced positions. It was full of soldiers, for it is here that the men are billeted when they are relieved from their spell of duty in the trenches. There were soldiers in all the lanes, soldiers at every door and window, soldiers lounging about the barns and outhouses, soldiers worn and haggard after days of incessant strain and ever-present peril of death, soldiers comparatively comfortable who had been resting, soldiers brisk and fresh sent up from the interior. Among them were the village folk, attending to their chickens and vegetable gardens, working in their orchards, and doing a smart trade in their tiny shops with the troops. They are used to the war in this little place, for it has been with them for many months, and things have settled down into a steady, if rather dull, routine.

All along the road we pass trains of wagons and heavy cars slowly moving or halted by the wayside. They have loaded up at the railway stations with the supplies which have been brought down from the bases still farther in the

rear ; and when darkness falls, so that they can get near the front without being swept off the face of the earth by a blast of shrapnel, they will pass their stores on to the hungry men in the trenches. This is regimental transport, for in France each regiment has its own train. The strip of country is all alive with men and horses and war material, though they do not make more show than is necessary. There are bodies of reservists and Territorials, with carts, machine-guns, stores, stowed away in copses and thickets ; and in a convenient hollow, well screened from inquisitive aviators by woods and shelving banks, we come upon an artillery and engineer supply camp. The sappers have built themselves huts of logs and thatch, and the place has quite a homelike look. There are kitchen huts which exhale an appetising odour of good baked meat, and there is a bathroom of brick, with a hot-water cistern above, so that the tired soldier or transport-driver may ease his stiffened limbs with a warm douche. The trousers of the men are stained to the knees with the clinging mud. They do not waste their time with the clothes-brush in the army of France. But the little shanties are clean and well kept. Some of them have wooden weathercocks and other adornments, and the occupants have labelled them with fancy names, such as " Mon Repos," " Caverne des Innocents," and " Hôtel Splendide." The men are cheerful and contented. For here in this camp they are near the road,

they are in touch with the world, they can talk to the village people. They are better off than their comrades up there on the ridge with the batteries, or those in the trenches.

In the war-zone towns, operations of an elaborate kind are carried on. We were taken round one where there are fine installations for the revictualling and transport services. The victualling yard was under the command of an officer who in war is a major and in peace a professor at the College of Pharmacy. <sup>b</sup> He is an authority on all that concerns the conservation and utilisation of food products. He showed us his slaughter-houses and his kitchens and laboratories, where the carcasses are boiled down, and where every gramme of fat and gristle is made into something immediately required by the troops. Small cakes compounded of lard and suet are turned out daily by the thousand and passed on to the trenches. This is cosmetic, with which the men anoint their sore and swollen feet and keep them from cramp and frost-bite.

In another yard we saw the travelling workshops for the transport trains. Here are motor wagons, fitted with lathes, forges, circular saws, welding machines, all the plant required for repairing or even making wheels, axles, tyres, engines. There were the "drive" and bustle of a big factory, a fierce clang of hammers and crowbars. And the whole concern is almost diabolically mobile. If, unhappily, the Germans



should ever be enabled to occupy this town again they would not capture the repairing-shops or the victualling depot. Plant, tools, machinery, retorts, boilers, furnaces, all could be taken to pieces and packed for transport in an hour. Before the first Uhlan patrol—*absit omen*—had appeared at the Mairie the entire installation would be whirling away westward as fast as powerful motor engines could urge it along the roads.

The men are among the most skilled mechanics and electricians of France, the very aristocrats of labour, who can earn more money in civil life than a lieutenant-colonel, though now they are working at the soldiers' pay of three-halfpence a day and their keep. It was all a wonderful demonstration of patriotic devotion and systematic adaptation of means to ends, and gave one an emphatic impression of the resolute energy and the logical completeness with which France is carrying on the grim struggle forced upon her.

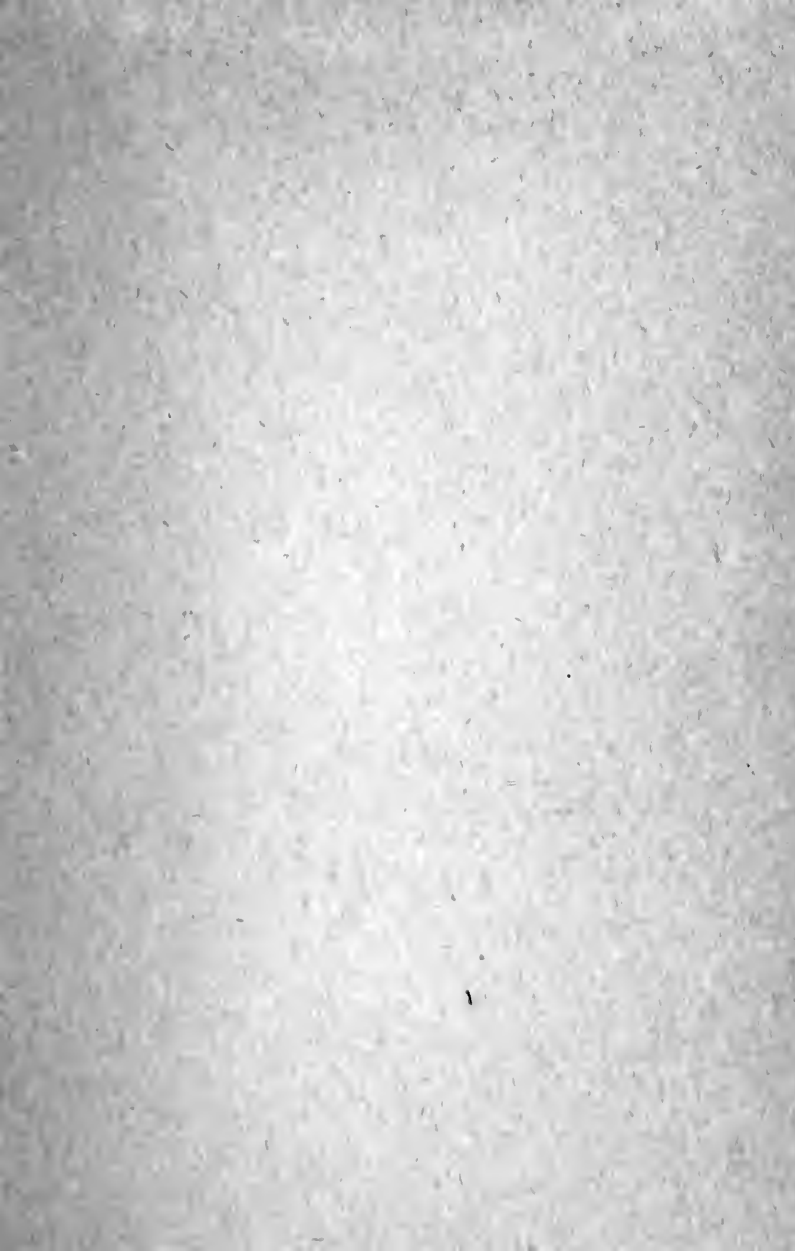
When you have been enabled to note how the valour of the French soldier is supported by the science of the French organiser you will not doubt that this great nation has thoroughly grasped the two essentials of modern war. It is indeed difficult to over-praise the quiet energy with which France is applying herself to the construction and maintenance of what is now, in some respects, the finest military apparatus in the world. "What about the

French Army ? ” I asked a distinguished British officer whom I happened to meet in the course of my tour. “ It is the best army in the field,” he replied. Certainly if there is a better one anywhere it must be very good indeed. The Germans accustomed themselves, before this war, to regard France as a nation in decay, and a few years ago the suggestion was sometimes hastily accepted in England. But there is no sign of decadence in the armed masses who hold back the tremendous impact of the invaders, or in the people who have braced themselves, so strenuously and quietly, against an ordeal such as Britain, in all the centuries of her history, has never been called upon to endure.

# INDEX

- American Revolution, 164, 169.  
 Austria, wars with France and Prussia, 16; defeats by Serbia, 91 *seq.*; its attitude towards the Serbs and Croats, 115.
- Balkan wars, 16; Serbs in, 99, 117.
- Bedford College, London, lectures at, 3.
- Belgium, a link between Latin and Teutonic worlds, 7; its gregariousness, 73; its duality of genius and temperament, 74; its modern literature, 76; and politics, 79; its vitality, 86.
- Bismarck, 177.
- British Empire, constitution of, 22; its ideals, 167; its fortunate history, 168; its evolution, 169; its general regard for freedom and self-government, 171; its relations to French and Dutch settlers, 172-6; its oriental dependencies, 177 *seq.*; its possible future, 190.
- Bryce, Viscount, 2, 161.
- Conscience, Henri, 80.
- Cramb, Professor, 182.
- Crimean war, 16.
- Croats, 103; their oppression by the Magyars, 116; their sense of racial unity, 117.
- Cromer, Earl, 180-1.
- Egypt and the Sudan, 180.
- England, love for, 19; "English Mind," 183.
- Epernay, 200.
- Europe, imperfect settlement of, in 1815, 15, 165; its wars and revolutions in nineteenth century, 16, 164.
- Federated Empires, 23, 191.
- France, culture of, 5; German misunderstanding of, 27; its Colonial Empire, 29, 185; its national unity, 32; its influence on European civilisation and literature, 33 *seq.*; its attitude to religion, 40; its unreadiness for the war, 47; its resolution and energy, 48, 197; its military organisation and efficiency, 211 *seq.*; excellence of its army, 214.
- Franco-German war, 16.
- Germany, its intellectual obligations to France, 5; its misunderstanding of the Russian and British character, 7, 65; and of the French, 27; its racial arrogance, 31; its consolidation under the military hegemony of Prussia, 17, 165.
- Hungarian Insurrection, 16.
- Hungary and the Southern Slavs, 115.
- Imperial Studies Committee, 2.
- Italy, unification of, 17; joins Triple Alliance, 27.

- Japan, geographical conditions of, 11 ; its history, 123 ; its national characteristics, 129 ; its conditions under feudalism and the Shogunate, 132-7 ; its religions, 138 ; its natural beauties, 146 ; its spirit illustrated in its literature, 157.
- Joan of Arc, statue of, 208.
- Joffre, General, 197.
- King's College, London, lectures at, 3.
- Kitchener, Lord, 180.
- Kosovo, battle of, 107.
- Kublai Khan, 124.
- Maeterlinck, 84.
- Marne, battle of the, 201.
- Milner, Viscount, 2.
- Nationality, 17, 31, 161, 163, 167.
- Newton, Dr. A. P., 3.
- Novgorod, Republic of, 53.
- Paris, aspect of in war-time, 198.
- Peter the Great, 55.
- Poland, oppression of, 16 ; insurrection, *ib.* ; under Prussian rule, 177 ; partition of, 187.
- Poltava, battle of, 56.
- Prussia and Germany, 17, 165, 170, 177.
- Renan on nationality, 31.
- Rheims, 206.
- Rubens, representative of Belgian character, 74, 76, 78, 86.
- Russia, temper of, 7 ; its racial and religious unity, 8 ; its internal, political, and industrial dissensions closed by the war, 9 ; its earlier history, 53 ; under the Tartars, 54 ; its peoples, 57 ; its army, 61 ; its rally round the Tsardom, 67 ; its activity in colonisation, 187 ; its possibilities of federation, 189.
- Serbs, in history, 11 ; their martyrdom and heroism, 12, 194 ; their achievement in the present war, 90 ; its meaning, 95 ; their army, 97 ; their character and temperament, 102 ; their struggles for freedom, 105 ; their poetry, 109 ; what they are fighting for, 114.
- Spain and the Indies, monarchy of, 14, 160, 163.
- Spanish Armada and Mongol attack on Japan, 124.
- Sudan, the, 180.
- Tartars in Russia, 53.
- Teutonic Knights, 53.
- Tolstoy, Leon, 57.
- Treitschke, 164.
- Turkey, in Europe and Asia, 16, 165.
- University College, London, lectures at, 3.
- Verhaeren, 84.
- Vienna, Congress of, 15, 165.
- Will to Live and Will to Power, 18, 22, 161.
- Wingate, Sir Reginald, 180.



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